

JUNE 1889.

The Theological Monthly

ISAIAH AND THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY.¹

THE Prophet Isaiah is, after Moses, perhaps the grandest figure in the Old Testament. We have to thank books like this of Mr. Smith's for setting him before us in the vividness of his human personality, amidst all the striking lights which recent discovery has cast on his environment. Increasingly is the need felt of bringing home to men's minds the fact that the Bible is a book of present-day interest—that it deals not only with far-off times and past events, but has

A BURDEN AND MESSAGE

for the age in which we ourselves live. We must try to see the great men of the Bible in the setting of their own times—to feel how terribly real and earnest was the work they had to do in the midst of their own surroundings—how their true greatness lay in the fact that they invariably took the right measure of each historical situation as it arose, saw with God-illuminated vision to the root of the moral, social, and political evils which confronted them, and laid bare the laws which, not in Israel only, but everywhere and in all times, infallibly determine the salvation or ruin of a people. It is because so little regard is paid to the genuinely historical interest in the Bible that

¹ *The Book of Isaiah.* By the Rev. Geo. Adam Smith, M.A. In Two Vols. Vol. I. Isaiah i.—xxxix. (Expositor's Bible Series). London: Hodder & Stoughton.

many parts of it remain to the bulk of readers unintelligible or obscure. There is no prophet whose writings are more frequently quoted in the New Testament than the Prophet Isaiah. Many passages from his prophecies are familiar to us as household words. Yet how

DIM A FIGURE

does Isaiah remain to most of those who thus hear his name. Who he was, when he lived, what were the political, and social, and religious circumstances of his age, what occasions called forth his prophecies, and gave them their particular character and colouring—of all this they know nothing, and have never, perhaps, thought it important to enquire. Yet it would be as hopeless to attempt to understand Isaiah's earlier prophecies—most of them manifestoes called forth by the state of morals in Judah, or by some grave turn in the course of political events—without some knowledge of contemporary circumstances, as it would be to collect the sense of the leaders of our morning newspapers without a modicum of acquaintance with the public policy and questions of the hour.

It might have been that we had no means of answering the questions we would like to ask about Isaiah. He might have been to us as Shakespeare, regarding whom we know very little more than the name. We know the book, not the man. As the case actually stands, it is far otherwise. Isaiah is a living, energetic personality, standing out against a clear background of history. He is a central figure of his age, not merely an undaunted preacher of righteousness, but a leading actor in the political movements of the times, a statesman and counsellor of kings, the hope and mainstay of the nation in its hours of sorest crisis. An invaluable aid has of late been obtained in reconstructing our knowledge of his times from

THE UNCOVERED PALACES,

the crewhile buried libraries, and the newly deciphered monuments of Assyria. It is exactly this period of "the days of

Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah," covered by Isaiah's ministry, which is thrown by these monuments into the strongest relief. Formerly it was possible to trace outlines—now we have practically a new book to place alongside the Bible, which throws a flood of light on the details of the picture, and makes Sargon and Sennacherib as familiar to us as if they were kings of the last century. Besides adding to our knowledge of the historical situation, this new-found lore enables us to fix the chronological arrangement of Isaiah's prophecies with a precision not hitherto attainable. Along the whole line of the political development, oracle can be fitted to event with great approximate accuracy.

The beginning of Isaiah's ministry carries us back to the eighth century before Christ. It was towards the close of the long reign of Uzziah, one of the ablest and most competent rulers who had sat on the throne of Judah. The latter years of the king's life were shadowed with the cloud of leprosy, but the government did not suffer in the hands of his vigorous son Jotham, who well sustained the traditions of his father's rule. Under these monarchs the kingdom rose to the highest point of external prosperity it had attained since the days of Solomon. But as often happens when rulers bend their energies to the strengthening of a state politically, without due regard to its moral growth, there had been going on unseen a process of deterioration which to a prophet's eye was of the most serious importance. With wealth had come luxury; with luxury, pride and dissoluteness; with this, the casting off of the fear of God, oppression of the poor, and a general loosening of social ties. It was amidst such conditions that Isaiah, then a young man, received

THE CALL

recorded in the sixth chapter of his book. Mr. Smith's treatment of this vision and of Isaiah's early life generally is an excellent specimen at once of the merits and weaknesses of his volume. Rarely have the sublimities of the Divine holiness, man's sense of sin, and the experience and effects of

forgiveness, been expounded in more glowing periods. But Mr. Smith sees fit to hang all this on an "ideal biography" of Isaiah, which appears to us as insecure in its historical foundations,¹ as it is gratuitous in the slight it puts on the earlier portion of the prophet's ministry. According to this new reading of events, Isaiah was at first a sharer "in the too easy public religion of his youth," an idealist dreaming of the impossible, and was only awakened to a sense of the realities of the situation by the shock of the great king's leprosy and death. It is certainly a hitherto unheard of idea that the magnificent passage in chap. ii. 2-5, common to Isaiah and Micah ["It shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established," &c.], is an Utopia, and "simply a less gross form of the king's own religious presumption" (p. 61). When chap. vi. was written down we shall not discuss, but we hesitate to assume that it was the product of a soul "grown somewhat uncertain, it may be, of her original inspiration" (p. 58). Whatever may have been Isaiah's moral and spiritual preparation for the call he received, one thing is clear, there was need for a prophet, and God gave one. The call came at a crisis when the nation was about to enter on a new step in its downward moral course. When after a brief independent reign Jotham died, and the throne was occupied by Ahaz—a weak and frivolous prince—the change became fully apparent. It is to the beginning of his reign, and the close of his predecessor's, that the prophecies of chaps. ii.-v. belong, which, with their terrible pictures of misgovernment and oppression, of nobles and ladies rolling in luxury at one end of the social scale, and squalid poverty clamouring for bare subsistence at the other, of shameless debauchery, and heartless grinding down of the cultivators of the soil, hold up to us so vividly

¹ There are three historical assumptions which underlie this part of Mr. Smith's book: (1) That Uzziah died in 740, (2) that his leprosy and death were nearly contemporaneous, (3) that the vision of Isa. vi. took place not before but after Uzziah's death. All these assumptions are doubtful, and the removal of any one of them shakes the foundations of Mr. Smith's theory.

MODERN SINS IN AN ANCIENT MIRROR,

—warnings we all do well to study.¹ Mr. Smith ascribes these pieces (chaps. ii.-iv.) to the stage of Isaiah's "apprenticeship," and supposes that in them "we have the obscure and tortuous path of a conviction struggling to light in the prophet's own experience," in this way explaining what he conceives to be their "obscurities and inconsistencies" (pp. 34-36). This patronising style of interpreting the great Isaiah may sit gracefully enough on "that modern Rabshakeh, Ernest Rénan" (p. 350),² but in the present volume we submit it is a little out of place. We shall recur to the point again. The splendid poem which constitutes the vestibule to the whole book (chap. i.)—called by Ewald "The Great Arraignment"—may belong to a later date, though we see no insuperable obstacle to its being placed in the reign of Ahaz during the invasions referred to in 2 Chron. xxviii. 5, 17-19. For this is the next stage in the advance. Under the feeble, dilettante Ahaz—a mere puppet in the hands of those who pulled the strings in the harem and the court (iii. 12), obstinate only in wickedness—the prosperity of the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham vanished like a dream. The surrounding tribes threw off their allegiance, and swooped down in turn like birds of prey on the kingdom that had ruled them. Specially formidable was the confederacy of Rezin of Damascus and Pekah king of Israel, which had for its express object to dethrone Ahaz, and set up a king of their own, a certain "son of Tabeel" in his stead, and which furnished the occasion of

¹ Finely incisive is Mr. Smith's remark—"It is with remarkable persistence that in every civilisation the two main passions of the human heart, love of wealth and love of pleasure, the instinct to gather and the instinct to squander, have sought precisely these two forms denounced by Isaiah on which to work their social havoc, appropriation of the soil and indulgence in strong drink. Every civilised community develops sooner or later its land-question and its liquor-question" (p. 41).

² Cf. Rénan's *History of Israel* (Eng. trans.), ii. p. 411, &c.

THE GREAT IMMANUEL PROPHECY

extending from chap. vii. to chap. ix. 8.¹ Isaiah is sent to reassure the king, terrified by the invasion; but Ahaz, who has already his own plans formed for calling in the help of the Assyrian, hypocritically rejects the sign that is offered him, and so further "wearies" God. It is then that, turning on him with unconcealed indignation, Isaiah gives, not for the sake of Ahaz, but for the godly in Judah, the sign of Immanuel—the maiden's Child—in whose birth and reign is found the guarantee for the perpetuity of David's house. The prophecy has its difficulties;² but if any one thinks it is an ordinary child whose birth is here predicted, he has only to read the chapters through to see good reason for a contrary opinion. Amidst all the trouble and desolation that was to come upon the land, it was the Child Immanuel which was the secret source of the prophet's hope. Do the Assyrians come in like a flood? His hope of deliverance is in the fact that it is the land of Immanuel (viii. 8). Do the peoples associate themselves and take counsel together? Their counsel shall come to nought. Why? "For Immanuel" (viii. 10). Shall the long, oppressive night of

¹ To this period also belongs the prophecy against Damascus (chap. xvii.). The fragment (ix. 9—x. 4) appears to be a continuation of chap. v. 25-30.

² The chief difficulty is in the apparent connection of the birth of the child with the events of the Syro-Ephraimitic war. The fulfilment is in the future, but it is not exactly as a future event that the prophet foresees it. The Hebrew is, "A virgin [or maiden] *is* with child, and *beareth* a son," &c. Not in fact, but to his inner eye the birth of this child is a present event, it has all the force of present reality to him—he speaks of it as present. It is to him as good as realised. He does not picture this child as away on in the future, but in his vision as now and here before him—he sees it growing up in poverty amidst the desolations which the people's sins have brought upon the land—and picturing it in this way as already present, he is able to interweave with it a definite prophecy of the near destruction of the actual invaders of Israel. Before this child, pictured as already born, would have arrived at years of discretion, "the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken." This prophecy, however, though fitted to console and strengthen the faith of those who were already believers, was too intangible a sign to produce much effect on the general body of the people. Accordingly a supplementary sign is given of a more palpable character—that of Maher-shalal-hash-baz (viii. 1-4).

sorrow at length pass away, and a new era of peace and righteousness be inaugurated—it is this child with the Divine titles on whose shoulder the government is placed (ix. 6, 7). It is the figure of the Messiah which looms before the prophet's mind, enlarged to supernatural dimensions, for how else, apart from the four names, can an unending reign be ascribed to Him? Mr. Smith cordially recognises the Messianic sense, though he somewhat detracts again from the force of this admission by seeking an origin for the promise out of the prophet's own subjective convictions.¹ A period of silence seems to follow in the Cassandra-like ministry of the prophet, during which the testimony is bound up, the law sealed, in the little circle of his immediate disciples (viii. 16). The silence is broken about the time of the great crash in the neighbouring kingdom which put an end for ever to its independence. Chap. xxviii. anticipates the fall of Samaria—that proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim; and chaps. x. 5-xii. is a longer oracle in which this dire event, viewed as already past, is made the occasion of a powerful denunciation of the Assyrian,² with a magnificent background of Messianic promise. We are now in

THE TIMES OF HEZEKIAH,

a king of a very different stamp from the ungodly Ahaz. The advent of this new ruler brought with it the hope of better days for Judah. The great event of the first year of his reign was a public religious reformation, and there is reasonable probability in the view that it is the features of his just and peaceful administration which form the starting point of some of the glowing pictures the prophet draws of

¹ The kernel of the oracle, which, according to Mr. Smith, was "falsified by events" in the form in which it was originally given, is taken to be "that whatsoever deliverer His people need and can receive shall be sent to them, and shall be styled by whatsoever names their hearts can best appreciate" (p. 142), and this is deduced from Jehovah's zeal for His own honour.

² The Assyrian is but an instrument—an axe or saw—in God's hands. He does not think he is, but serves his own ends. Howbeit, when God has used him for His purposes, He will in turn punish his proud heart.

the reign of the Messiah—*e.g.*, of that beautiful description in the thirty-second chapter, "Behold a king shall reign in righteousness," &c. The undercurrents of society, however, were but little changed by these surface measures of reform, and soon we find things drifting back into the old way of worldly policy and intrigue—the more that the Assyrian, long hanging like a storm-cloud on the horizon, has now become a near and imminent peril. Chap. xx., inserted in the collection of Oracles on Foreign Nations, is a striking glimpse into the troubled politics of the reign of Sargon.¹ The immediate object is to warn against the policy of seeking help against Assyria by alliances with Egypt. It is to this period that Mr. Cheyne refers many of the prophecies usually connected with the expedition of Sennacherib, but till at least further evidence is forthcoming it is safer to adhere to the ordinary view. In working up this later period of Isaiah's ministry, Mr. Smith is at his best. The episode of Hezekiah's sickness, under the title of "An Old Testament Believer's Sick-bed," is admirably handled, though the denial to Hezekiah of any hope of a future life—any, at least, which could be a comfort to him—seems put too absolutely. Mr. Smith has himself well stated the grounds of the Old Testament hope (p. 395). It is not fair to judge a man by moments of despondency and depression when his faith fails him, and all the gloom and fear attending the plunge into the unknown come back on him with unrelieved force. On the recovery from sickness came the embassy from Babylon, and Hezekiah's feet began to slip—one proof among others that at this time his wealth and prestige were acting unfavourably on his character. The policy of resort to Egypt was now in the ascendant, and for a time Hezekiah appears to have been carried away by it. Isaiah's voice alone was lifted up clear and strong in denunciation of its folly (xxx., xxxi.), and in

¹ Mentioned alone in this passage in all ancient literature, Sargon was long held by many to be a myth. His palace was the first to be disinterred in the Nineveh excavations. His inscriptions give a full account of the siege of Ashdod referred to by Isaiah, and of Hezekiah's implication in the plot.

predictions of the approaching investment of Jerusalem by the Assyrian (xxix). It was in truth the time of

ISAIAH'S GREATEST ACTIVITY,

and ended in the sublimest possible vindication of a ministry carried on for thirty years in the midst of almost continuous opposition, mockery, and unbelief. Ere long Sennacherib¹ was actually in the country (701 B.C.), devastating it in every direction, reducing its fenced cities, and taking captive enormous multitudes of its population. The effect on the capital is vividly depicted in chap. xxii. Confidence was exchanged for panic; the cowardly rulers who had been the inspirers of the Egyptian policy fled; pestilence broke out in the crowded city, and the demoralised populace, throwing off all restraint, gave themselves up to riot and debauchery. The very acuteness of the crisis, however, brought with it in a measure its own remedy. For the moment Sennacherib was bought off by heavy tribute (2 Kings xviii. 14-16). At the instigation of Isaiah (xxii. 20-25: cf. xxxvii. 2), Hezekiah had changed his advisers; and now convinced of the folly of his worldly trusts, suffered himself to be guided entirely by the prophet. The people were rallied, and something like order was restored.² It was a terrible disappointment, after all they had gone through, when a new contingent of Sennacherib's army appeared before the gates of Jerusalem, again demanding the surrender of the city. The story of the deliverance is familiar to every one. It is not doubted that now when things were at their blackest, as formerly when the invader was yet remote (xxix.), Isaiah with unfaltering confidence predicted the deliverance—predicted it in strains of scornful exultation

¹ To this period belong not only the discourses relating to the invasion of Sennacherib, but many of the oracles now embraced in the collection (chaps. xiii.-xxiii.).

² In his undoubtedly powerful chapter on this subject, Mr. Smith in a somewhat far-fetched manner attributes this change to Isaiah's preaching a Gospel of forgiveness, based on the fact that God had fulfilled His promise of deliverance to the city—the deliverance, forsooth, consisting in Hezekiah's humiliating payment of excessive tribute.

(xxxvii. 21-36)—and staked his prophetic reputation on the fulfilment. Nor does the most sceptical critic doubt that some great catastrophe did fall on the Assyrians, and compelled their sudden retreat from the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Chap. xxxiii. is the prophetic pæan over their disappearance. Isaiah had consistently foretold that Jerusalem would be delivered, but not by battle or hand of man—delivered suddenly; and his word came absolutely true (cf. x. 33; xxix. 5-8; xxx. 30-33; xxxvii. 7). This is the hour of the supreme triumph of the prophet—the highest point of his influence—and thenceforth we see no more of him. The latter portion of his book relates solely to the future.

On this period of Isaiah's public ministry, Mr. Smith has unquestionably given us a bold, brilliant, original book—one which has already won for him the highest encomiums from competent critics. If we cannot endorse everything that these critics have written, it is not because we are insensible to the fascination of much of its contents. Mr. Smith has many qualifications for undertaking with success the interpretation of this greatest of the prophets of the Old Covenant. His

HISTORICAL SENSE

is strong. He can throw himself with ease and appreciation into the times he is describing, can call up by vivid, imaginative effort the very form and impress of a situation, can describe it in terse, vivid, and effective language. His chapter on "The World in Isaiah's Day" reads like a chapter of Freeman's—to whose style his own strikes us as bearing a considerable resemblance. He has thoroughly assimilated the new learning, is an admirable Hebraist, often venturing on bold, forcible renderings of his own of Isaiah's pregnant passages, can rise to high levels of genuine eloquence, and is a master of trenchant epithet, of lively metaphor, of keen-edged satirical remark. These are qualities of immense importance in the exposition of a prophet whose own style is so sustained, who abounds in vivid, light-flashing metaphor, and who wields

the weapon of satiric denunciation with such terrible effect in his exposure of the sins and hypocrisies of his time. Mr. Smith has seized also on the essential features of

ISAIAH'S THEOLOGY—

his burning conviction of Jehovah as the Holy One, his faith in the living reality of righteousness, his doctrine of the remnant, his assurance of the purification of Zion through judgment, his anticipation of the Messiah and of a Messianic age. We have no space to quote, or it would be a pleasure to give some examples of the powerful and striking ways in which these ideas are enforced, and modern illustrations and applications sought for them. Were we asked to single out a specimen which would give a good idea of Mr. Smith's style of treatment in its most characteristic qualities, we would probably fix on his inimitable description of the Rabshakeh before Jerusalem (chap. xxii.), winding up with a passage which we take to be one of the most eloquent in the book (p. 348). We must, however, pass from this to point out some things in which, with all its fresh thinking and eloquent modernisation of Isaiah's ideas, we think this book of Mr. Smith's is seriously defective. We do not stay on minor defects, though there are some of these also which in fairness might deserve notice. Mr. Smith's passion for what the authoress of *Robert Elsmere* in a recent article¹ calls "historical translation" sometimes carries him too far. With a *penchant* for the novel, ingenious, paradoxical, he imports into Isaiah's teaching ideas which we suspect are more conceits of his own than a true interpretation of the prophet's thinking; he is fonder of seizing what he takes to be the central thought of a passage, and unfolding it in his own way with modern applications, than in patiently following out, as a model expositor should, the objective course of his author's ideas. Like Rénan, he is sometimes more concerned with the production of an effective picture than with the objective histori-

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1889.

cal fact. There is not always the evidence of thinking that has been patiently matured, and clarified from its first cruder elements; and the love of strong, striking expression leads him occasionally into the use of epithets and phrases which jar at least on some ears as slightly irreverent. These, however, with a tendency, perhaps, to overdo parallels, are blemishes upon the surface, and some of them would not be blemishes at all in another kind of work. Much more serious, in our view, is the

THEORY OF PROPHECY

which underlies the book, and gives a character more or less pronounced to all its expositions. We concede that a great service is done by a book which brings out so effectively as this does the human side of prophecy. To understand the work and teaching of Isaiah, we must get rid of our idea of his prophecies as a mere *Church* book; must cease to regard the prophets as mere foretellers; must see in them living preachers of righteousness and rebukers of existing sins. But it is one thing to do this, and another practically to give up the idea of predictive prophecy altogether, except as a deduction of the prophet's own mind from certain general principles of the Divine government, or, as a political forecast, the correctness of which depended on the shrewdness of his judgment in seizing the issues of the movements and combinations of his age. That this is Mr. Smith's idea of predictive prophecy, and his only one, needs no proof to any attentive reader of his book. To Isaiah, we are told, political prudence was a part of religion. "Knowledge of men, experience of nations, the mental strength which never forgets history, and is quick to mark new movements as they rise, Isaiah would have called the direct inspiration of God. And it was certainly these qualities in this Hebrew which provided him with the materials for his prediction of the siege of Jerusalem" (p. 214). The same thought is elaborated more fully in the chapter on Isaiah's predictions towards the close of the book (ch. xxiv.). It is not only that Isaiah's convictions which may be called political are "evidently gathered from his observation of

political circumstances as these developed themselves before his eyes," but even his Messianic predictions are but "corollaries" from his general religious convictions. "To Isaiah," in short, "inspiration was nothing more nor less than the possession of certain strong moral and religious convictions which he felt he owed to the Spirit of God, and according to which he interpreted, and even dared to foretell, the history of his people and the world"¹ (p. 372). It is in keeping with this view that in his forecastings of the future Isaiah frequently made "mistakes"—how, with any mind short of omniscient could it be otherwise—that the tone of his predictions varied with his moods, that he promised sometimes more and sometimes less, that he occasionally said "extreme" things, that in all but their essential substance his prophecies are fluctuating and inconsistent. And we are bid admire "how profitable, how edifying is the Bible's own account of its inspiration!" On which we would remark—I. That this, at all events, is

NOT THE BIBLE'S OWN ACCOUNT

of predictive inspiration. The Bible recognises predictive prophecy, and makes no allowance for "mistakes" (Deut. xviii. 21).² Its pages abound in minute and circumstantial predictions of events which no one will pretend were within the scope of natural foresight. The rationalist may explain these as unhistorical, legendary, *vaticinia post eventa*, or anything else he pleases. They are at least there as witnesses to the Biblical belief in the reality of supernatural prediction. A very minor instance is the prophecy of Agabus, in Acts xi. 28, of the famine that was about to come throughout all the

¹ So Ewald writes, "What the prophet can, with perfect right, announce as the word of his God is, in its contents, nothing but the application of some general Divine truth to a given moral condition, or a clear contemplation as to the confusions or unevennesses of moral life before him, springing out of the clear light of the Spirit. What belongs to it falls within the province of the purer, *i.e.*, the Divine Spirit; and if a prophet knows anything more, and can give answer as to other questions, this is something accidental."—*Die Propheten*, i. 12.

² Cf. Is. xli. 21-26; xlii. 9; xlv. 7, 25-28; xlv. 21; xlvi. 9, 10; &c.

world. It is a further Biblical view that the true prophet knew perfectly well how to distinguish between his own thoughts and the words God gave him to speak. But 2.—The view of prophecy here laid down is

NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH FACTS.

The prediction of the destruction of Sennacherib's army is a case in point. It is allowed on all hands that the prediction was given, and Mr. Smith acknowledges that Isaiah "staked his prophetic reputation and pledged the honour of Jehovah and the continuance of the true religion among men" on its fulfilment (p. 213). Would he have been entitled to do this if the prophecy had been merely a forecast of his own mind? Is any human judgment so infallible as to be entitled to say absolutely how God must and shall act in a given contingency if His cause is not to fail and His character to suffer dishonour? It is contended that Isaiah's judgment was not infallible. The very case against predictive prophecy is made to rest on the supposed failures in the fulfilment of particular predictions. Where, then, is the absolute certainty that Isaiah would not be found to have made a "mistake" in this instance also? Either the failures in definite predictions are few, in which case it is more likely that the "mistake" is in the critics' reading of the events than in the prophecy itself; or, these failures are numerous, in which case it was an act of unwarranted daring on the part of Isaiah to stake so much on a prophecy which might fail. But the singular thing is, it did not fail. Mr. Smith beats the air on this subject in a most uncertain fashion. "At the beginning of the end," it is acknowledged, "such an issue was by no means probable" (p. 307); it was "a marvellous prediction" (p. 368); yet after all not "so very marvellous for a prophet to make who had Isaiah's conviction that Jerusalem must survive, and Isaiah's practical acquaintance with the politics of the time" (p. 355). We might ask, What absolute certainty attaches even to the conviction that Jerusalem must survive, seeing that this was itself a deduction, it might be a mistaken one, from more general principles?

Jerusalem had been taken before ; it was doomed to be taken again ; why might it not be God's will that it should be taken now ? The prediction, treat it as we may, was undoubtedly marvellous. It is the more so when we reflect that for thirty or forty years Isaiah had uniformly had the same story to tell of an invasion of the Assyrian, and of his sudden destruction before the walls of Jerusalem. If the incident stood alone, it would be the most remarkable on record, though it might still be conceivably explained as a coincidence. But the weakness of this theory of prophecy is that the instance does not stand alone. It does not stand alone in Isaiah's own case, for, beginning with the long vistas of undeniable prophecy in chap. vi., we have numerous other express and definite predictions in his writings. The same is true of the other prophets, e.g., of Amos, of Jeremiah, of Ezekiel. We grant, of course, that there is an ideal element in prophecy, that as the vistas recede the outlines become more general and the perspective is more indistinct, that the blessings of a future age clothe themselves in the forms of the present, &c. But this is not incompatible with true supernatural prediction, both nearer and remote.¹ We have but to contrast the tone of an Amos, who, as Wellhausen admits, "prophesied as close at hand the downfall of the kingdom which just at that moment was rejoicing most in the consciousness of power and the deportation of the people to a far-off northern land,"² with the language, say, of a John Bright during the progress of the American Civil War, to see how great is the difference between prophecy and "political perception," albeit the latter is quickened with the most intense consciousness of the righteousness of a cause. "What the revolt is to accomplish," said Mr. Bright, "is still hidden from our sight ; and I will abstain now,

¹ Mr. Cheyne has broad views on prophecy, but even he does not go so far as Mr. Smith. He does not pronounce definitely against historical predictive prophecy (*Proph. of Isa.*, i. p. 204) ; finds in the Psalter and Isaiah freshadowings of special circumstances in the life of our Saviour (ii. p. 192) ; and sees, what Mr. Smith does not, the Divinity of Christ in the title 'El gibbōr in Isa. ix. 6 (ii. p. 196).

² *Hist. of Israel* (Eng. trans.), p. 470 ; cf. on Isaiah, p. 483.

as I have always abstained, from predicting what is to come. I know what I hope for—what I shall rejoice in—but I know nothing of future events that will enable me to express a confident opinion.”¹ We would add (3) that this theory of prophecy weakens the foundations of

BELIEF IN SUPERNATURAL INSPIRATION

of every kind. It is very well to draw the distinction which Mr. Smith does between “political convictions,” which the prophet “gathered from his observation of political circumstances as these developed before his eyes,” and “the moral and religious convictions which he felt he owed to the communication of the Spirit of God” (p. 372); but to what does this lead us when we are further assured that these political convictions also “Isaiah would have called the direct inspiration of God” (p. 214), that it was “God’s Spirit, to whose inspiration Isaiah traced all political perception” (p. 355), that for both elements, the moral and political alike, “he claimed the inspiration of God’s spirit” (p. 369)? Is there after all any difference in kind between the inspiration by which Isaiah got his “political convictions,” *i.e.*, between natural insight, statesmanlike sagacity, &c., and the other “religious convictions,” “for which he himself was strongly sure that he had the warrant of the Spirit of God”? (p. 216). Isaiah, from all that appears, was not more “strongly sure” of the supernatural source of the latter order of convictions than he was of the Divine source of the former order; we are told that he put them all in the same category as to origin. Are we, then, to hold that Isaiah was mistaken in making no difference between them, that the latter were *really* inspired in a sense in which the former were not? Or do both truly stand upon the same level the inspiration² being simply God’s

¹ Speech, June 30th, 1863.

² Professor Momerie in his recent volume on “Inspiration” makes no mince-meat of the matter. “By all such expressions as ‘thus saith the Lord,’ they merely meant to assert the strength of their own conscientious convictions” (p. 9, and *passim*).

operation in the natural workings of the mind? This, in truth, is the most subtle form of an anti-supernaturalistic theory of revelation at present in the field. Our modern rationalists (*e.g.*, Pfeleiderer) do not for a moment deny "revelation"—far be such a thing from them—but that which on the Divine side is viewed as revelation is from the human side simply the natural development of man's moral and religious consciousness. We do not for a moment impute this theory to Mr. Smith, but we must say that no small part of his language seems adapted to imply it, the description of the first chapter of Isaiah, *e.g.*, as "just the parable of the awful compulsion to think which men call conscience," the frequent parallels with those other "prophets," Mazzini, Carlyle, Hugo ("the cases of the Hebrew and Italian prophets are wonderfully alike," p. 86), the growth and changes of his prophetic convictions, &c. There is a loud call for writers who indulge in plausible speech of this kind to come down from vagueness and tell us exactly in what sense they do speak of "inspiration," and how it is understood to differ—if it differs at all—from ordinary religious genius. If the latter is all that is meant, we will require to recast our ideas about the authority of the prophets, and to ask ourselves seriously what place remains for him who is greater than the prophets, the Son of Man Himself.

These questions have a direct bearing on the remaining topic of

THE UNITY OF THE BOOK

of Isaiah. But this is a subject too large to raise in the conclusion of an article. We agree with Mr. Smith that the question of the authorship of the disputed chapters is "one which can be looked at calmly. It touches no dogma of the Christian faith." Further we agree with him that "'facts' of style will be regarded with suspicion by any one who knows how they are employed by both sides in such a question as this" (p. 402). He himself (following Cheyne) accepts as Isaianic an oracle (chap. xxi. 1-10), which the majority of

critics, on grounds of style and contents, have voted down to the captivity; while "the considerable similarity" which Dr. Samuel Davidson observes between this oracle and chaps. xiii. and xiv., on the ground of which he pronounces them to be from the same hand, and therefore unauthentic,¹ is not allowed to reverse the verdict, and now to secure the latter chapters for Isaiah. The reason is that it is thought an occasion can be found in Isaiah's life for chap. xxi. 1-10, while no such occasion presents itself for chaps. xiii. and xiv. The decision, therefore, turns on a theory of prophecy. The controversy as to the later portion of the book (chaps. xl.-xlvi.) has passed into a new phase since Mr. Cheyne has shown—and on good grounds—that there are at least some portions of it which cannot with any show of plausibility be carried down to the exile. We do not, however, venture further into this field. In the theory of prophecy we have criticised—and the whole movement of thought connected therewith—we suspect Mr. Smith might find another illustration of the "drift" he speaks of so eloquently on p. 252; and we can only regret that in this volume his attitude is so little that of "a man" who sets his back to resist it.²

JAMES ORR.

¹ Introduction to the Old Testament, iii. p. 16.

² In a recent article (*Homiletic Magazine*, March, 1889) Archdeacon Farrar lends the support of his eloquence to the theory of prophecy above criticised, and launches out with his usual strength of language against those who take a different view. But it is a mere confusing of the issue to represent the choice as lying between this theory and "the ignorant, conventional, and traditional notion" of the prophets "as merely, or mainly, describers of the future." We are not shut up to either of these alternatives. After all, in the latter part of his article, Archdeacon Farrar recognises that prophecy *has* a great deal to do with the future, and centres "more and more brightly, more and more definitely, in a Divine Person, an anointed Deliverer, a coming Saviour for all mankind." There is, therefore, prediction, and the only question is whether this can be accounted for by the hopes and surmises (often erroneous) of the prophet's own mind, or whether we must not attribute it, with the prophets themselves, to supernatural inspiration, giving foresight and certainty beyond the reach of the natural faculties. For notwithstanding the Archdeacon's watering down of their utterances, we must contend that this is really what the prophets claimed.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND HYMNALS.

HYMN-SINGING used to be one of the points of difference between Dissent and the Church of England, and indeed gave occasion to one of the epithets aimed by Episcopalians at Nonconformists. Psalm-singing was one of the many adjectives prefixed to the term Puritan. But this point of difference has faded away, and hymn-singing, instead of being one of the dividing, has become one of the uniting influences between Church and Dissent. Churchmen may still regard Dissenters as schismatics, but the schism cannot be very serious whilst the fretted roofs of venerable cathedrals echo with verses penned by the schismatics. Dissenters may still regard Churchmen as heretics, but the heresy cannot be very pervasive whilst even the most orthodox of meeting houses ring with the hymns of Anglican priests and bishops. Hymns, in fact, now form a point of union between parties who are widely sundered by rite, dogma, and ecclesiastical idea. The most fervid Methodist feels half at home in Churches, from which his ancestors were thrust out, as he hears sung the well-loved verses of the venerated Charles Wesley. The highest Anglican, if he should stray into some humble village conventicle, is somewhat placated as he hears, and perhaps joins in, the singing of well-known verses by Bishop Wordsworth or John Keble. If the Churches are ever to be drawn into unity, it will be not by the dogmas of the theologian, but by the verses of the hymnist.

In the matter of hymns the Churchman is as free as the freest of Dissenters. In the matter of prayer in the Church of England there is still the most rigid uniformity. Every petition must come out of the one book of Common Prayer; its hymns may be taken from any source, and from any collection. Here the Church of England is grandly inconsistent, just as the Independents once were, when they allowed every preacher to make his own prayers, but

only permitted the people to sing the words of Dr. Watts. The Independents, however, have grown more catholic in the matter of hymns ; perhaps some day the Church of England will grow more catholic in the matter of prayer, and allow her congregations to use what prayers as she now allows them to sing what hymns they like. In the nature of things there is no more reason for uniformity in prayer than in praise. There are some Churchmen who desire uniformity in both cases, and look forward to the time when their Church shall have a Book of Common Praise as she now has a Book of Common Prayer. But the drift of feeling is in the opposite direction, and it is more likely that variety will invade the domain of prayer than that uniformity will prevail in that of praise.

This variety in praise is partly due to the fact that hymn-singing in the Church of England is a late innovation, and is therefore marked by the modern spirit which tends away from uniformity. Had hymns been introduced into the Episcopal Church at an earlier era—in the Tudor instead of the Hanoverian dynasty—there would probably have been an authorised hymnal as there is an authorised prayer-book. Indeed, when the Psalms formed the only praise-book of the Episcopal Church, each version adopted had to secure royal permission. But that age has passed. Where uniformity has been secured, it may be maintained ; but the parties in the Established Church are too many and too pronounced in their ideas to allow of any further attempts to introduce uniformity into new regions. In that of hymn-singing freedom is and probably will remain the rule. Even the most conservative, when they have tasted the sweets of freedom, do not readily forego her delights. The stoutest Anglican would like freedom to alter the Prayer-Book in a sacramentarian direction, as would the most Calvinistic Low Churchman, provided it were in the direction of a less sacramentarian and a more pronounced Evangelicalism. To construct an authorised hymnal for the Church of England would probably raise a storm which the authorities of that Church (if indeed there be such) would find themselves unable to quell. “Let well alone” is therefore seen to be the true policy.

Since the hymn-singing era dawned on the Church of England, probably not less than 1,000 separate hymnals have been published for her use. At the very lowest computation, and that is probably far below the real number, there have been 500; whilst if those for special classes were added, the number would be vastly increased, probably doubled.

It is well known that long before the first hymn-book was introduced into the Church of England a few hymns were appended to the Psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins and Tate and Brady. This was the thin end of the wedge.

The first hymn-book, however, for use in the Church of England was that by John Wesley in 1737, entitled, *Collection of Psalms and Hymns. Charlestown. Printed by Lewis Timothy, 1737.* This was ten years before the foundation of Methodism. This contained seventy hymns, more than a third of which were by Dr. Watts. This was followed in 1760 by a collection by Madan, of a Calvinistic type, largely based on George Whitefield's book of 1753. This contained 100 more than Wesley's, and provided twenty-seven hymns for sacramental use, for which Wesley had made no provision. Seven years later appeared a collection edited by the Rev. R. Conyers, which embodied a large portion of Madan's, and added thereto a few new hymns by Cowper and Newton. Following these there were Dr. Conyer's collection in 1775, Toplady's in 1776, into which he introduced a few of his own hymns and many from Nonconformist writers. A few hymnals of no distinctive value appeared in the last quarter of the 18th century; whilst in the first half of the 19th century their name is legion, many of them being of provincial origin and scarcely known to the Church at large. Liberty became almost license. Hymn-book editing was regarded as a work which almost any clergyman was competent to undertake. Here and there a book attained to more than a local success and circulation—such as *Psalms and Hymns by Hugh Stowell, 1831*; *Psalms and Hymns for Public and Private Use, by W. H. Bathurst, in the same year*; *The Christian Psalmody, by Edward Bickersteth, in 1833*; *Psalms and Hymns for Public, Private, and Social Worship,*

by H. V. Elliott, in 1835; and *A Selection of Psalms and Hymns adapted to the Services of the Church of England* (1836), by W. J. Hall, which is generally known as the Mitre Hymn-book; but the great mass of hymnals edited and published had only a brief day and soon ceased to be. During the years which succeeded this period, though a considerable number of hymnals sprang up in a sporadic way, yet the tendency was toward the production of fewer and more representative collections. Many influences probably conspired to bring this about, among which may be mentioned the following: The increase in the number of hymns and the greater attention given to hymnody made it more difficult for those who were not specialists to undertake the compilation of hymnals, likely to become popular. The production of better books rendered ill-considered collections less attractive to congregations. The fading away of minute doctrinal differences and the merging of people in great parties rendered unnecessary books, to embody the particular views of separate congregations. The failure of a large number of hymnals to attain popularity, and the loss involved in their publication, probably served as a warning to men desirous of editing books of their own. Whilst the manifest inconvenience of a multitude of hymnals in use in the same section of the Church probably awakened the desire to lessen their number and to limit them to those representative of the doctrinal position of great parties in the Church of England.

Gradually the many streams in which the hymnody of each of the various parties had run, united, and settled down to one or two representative books. In this matter the Evangelical party deserves first mention, since hymn-singing in the Church of England began with it; the Moderates scorning it as having a Dissenting flavour and being too much allied with emotional Puritan ideas, whilst the High Church party regarded it as somewhat of an irregularity in worship. In this section of the Church, the many collections—and they are too numerous to mention—formerly in use have gradually given way to *The Hymnal Companion to The*

Book of Common Prayer, edited by E. H. Bickersteth, now Bishop of Exeter. This may be regarded as the full fruitage of the Bickersteth tree, the earlier ones having been *The Christian Psalmody*, edited by his father, and *Psalms and Hymns*, edited by the son. To a very large extent it is the modern representative of, and moves along the lines of, the early hymn-books of the English Church. Its chief merits are its fidelity to the original texts of the hymns, and its inclusion of a larger number of those which had established themselves as favourites, than any other Church of England book. It is thus rather the registration of a judgment and taste already formed than an attempt to guide the worshipper into new pastures. It is decidedly weak in translations from other languages, there being only six from the Greek, fifteen from the Latin, and fewer even than that from the German. Even here the Editor has followed rather than led. Though the Editor (Dr. Bickersteth) is a poet, his hymnal is very deficient in poetic elements.

The Church of England Hymn-Book, edited by Godfrey Thring, belongs to a school somewhat higher than *The Hymnal Companion*, and is strong in the very points in which that popular book is weak. It is richer in poetic elements, and in translations from other languages. Although the text of the hymns is not so faithful to the originals, yet the slightest deviation therefrom is set forth. From a literary and poetic standpoint this is the finest collection yet issued for Church of England use, and had the Editor not inserted so many of his own compositions and renderings of others' hymns, it would have been, in my judgment, the finest collection yet published. Many of Mr. Thring's hymns are indeed of great value (he is a far greater hymnist than Bishop Bickersteth, though not so considerable a poet); but like most hymnists who have been editors, he has been too generous with his own hymns.

Church Hymns, issued by the S. P. C. K., does not differ much, in a doctrinal sense, from Godfrey Thring's collection, but presents its doctrine more in the form of the Great Divines of the Church of England. It is perhaps less

of a party book than any other now in use in the Church of England. The Editors have dealt in a much freer way with the texts of the hymns, nor have they indicated the alterations they have made. It falls somewhat below Mr. Thring's in a literary and poetic sense, but has attained to a far wider popularity, partly, because issued by a great society, and partly, because wedded to music by so able an editor as Sir Arthur Sullivan.

The Hymnary is a book of an entirely different type. It is modelled after the Breviaries of the Roman Church, and contains hymns not only for the various ecclesiastical seasons, but also for the days of the week and the hours of the day. It includes a very large number of translations from the Latin, which give it a subdued and unpopular tone. A large number of the hymns are good but heavy. It embodies the results of much hymnological study, but is unsuited for general use. It broke new, or rather recultivated ancient ground; but it has contributed very few hymns to the general use of the Church, even its new material has never caught the popular ear.

The nearest approach to an authorised hymn-book in the manner of its preparation and its extensive adoption is the well known *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. More than any other hymnal it is the result of concerted action. Whilst the mass of hymnals favoured by the Evangelicals have without any such action given way to *The Hymnal Companion to the Book of Common Prayer*, a number of those of the High Church party were put aside to make way for *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, whilst certain editors who had made preparations for the issue of new hymnals laid aside their plans and joined the company organized to prepare this new collection. A small and tentative book with the simple title *Hymns*, which contained 130, was first issued in 1859, with an invitation from the compilers for suggestions for a final collection. Two years later *Hymns Ancient and Modern* made its appearance containing, 273 hymns, more than half of which were from ancient sources, the translations being chiefly from the pens of Dr. Neale, Chandler, Caswall, and

I. Williams; most of which were altered by the Compilers. Only about twelve new hymns were introduced. Its success, however, was phenomenal. This was partly due to the concerted action which had called it into being, and still more to the fact that it met the desire for a hymn-book which should link the Church of England, not, as most previous ones had done, to the writers of the Puritan, but to those of the Catholic school of thought; whilst in addition to this, its music, the best suited for the purpose which had then appeared, carried it even into quarters where its doctrinal and sacramentarian flavour was not quite acceptable. Since the original publication in 1861 two supplements have appeared—the first having been afterwards incorporated into a revised edition of the work, and the last, just issued, remaining in the form of supplemental hymns. The completed book contains 638 hymns, and though the later additions have not drawn so largely as the original work on ancient sources, yet the book as a whole is rightly named *Hymns Ancient and Modern*.

From a literary and poetic standpoint the book falls far below Mr. Thring's collection, and even *Church Hymns*; whilst in the matter of alterations it offends even more deeply than the latter. As to doctrine, it follows the lines of *The Hymnary*, but in a more popular way. Although in the last-issued supplement it connects itself with the Puritan by the insertion of many hymns by Charles Wesley, Watts, and others, yet the work as a whole is closely linked to the Catholic sources of hymnody. As a collection of hymns it is far from remarkable; a large portion is exceedingly commonplace, but it met a want, and aided by its music, in which its strength really lies, it has attained to a popularity unequalled by any hymnal in the Church of England. One hymn-book after another, even such carefully-edited ones as the *Salisbury Hymn-Book* have given way before it, even in that diocese, and it is, save in quarters where Evangelicalism or a still higher Anglicanism than it represents hold sway, the accepted book.

The most noteworthy collection of the latter class is *The People's Hymnal*, which for its purpose is a meritorious production, and does credit to the taste of Dr. Littledale, to

whose labours it is chiefly due. It probably contains as much that is poetic as is consistent with its very high doctrine, but its acceptance is not such as to warrant further description.

The Berwick Hymnal deserves mention as representing the opposite pole of the theological and ecclesiastical compass.

Marvellous in comprehensiveness is the Church which has given rise to *The People's Hymnal* on the one side, and *The Berwick Hymnal* on the other, whilst equally wonderful is it, that a Church which at one time sneered at hymn-singing should now be on the high road to rival, even if it does not excel Dissenters, in the cultivation and use of hymns.

The relative popularity of the principal hymnals may, perhaps, be judged from their use in London. According to the new *Mackeson's Guide to London Churches, Hymns Ancient and Modern* is now used in five hundred and eighty churches, *Church Hymns* in one hundred and eighty-three, and *The Hymnal Companion* in one hundred and seventy-five. *Mercer*, which ten years ago was used in forty churches, has disappeared from all but seven, *Kemble* has shrunk from fifteen to eight, and *Windle* from twelve to four. During the last six years *Hymns Ancient and Modern* has gained a place in thirty-eight, *Church Hymns* in twelve, and *The Hymnal Companion* in ten churches.

Of Church of England hymnody as a whole it may be said—

1. That the general tendency has been to rely on the old rather than the new. That section of it which follows the Catholic tradition reverts very largely to hymns from ancient and mediæval sources, whilst that which follows the Puritan tradition favours hymns by the earlier authors of that school of thought. In the new Supplement to *Hymns Ancient and Modern* recourse has also been had to what may be roughly called Puritan sources of hymnody, such as Dr. Watts, Charles Wesley, and others. In the case of Charles Wesley, however, hymns which in their letter incline to the sacramentarian idea have been chosen.

2. The bulk of hymns in Church of England hymnals have a pretty distinct doctrinal tone. Some are little more

than versified dogma, whilst nearly all are more or less suffused with doctrine. There are exceptions to this, but the great bulk of the hymns included are more or less doctrinal.

3. There is a great lack of really poetic hymns. The general style is, as Dean Stanley once remarked, "pedestrian." The vision and faculty divine of the poet has not been regarded as a qualification of the hymnist, but rather as the reverse. I do not know of a single *popular* Church of England hymnal that, taken as a whole, could be described as poetic, or that any one would care to read for its intrinsic beauty. The poetic hymnists are for the most part conspicuous by their absence. At least a score of such could be named who are not represented in hymnals of the Establishment.

4. Little use has been made of the hymns of America. Few, indeed, have been drawn from this source, and those by no means the best, and some even of these have been cruelly mangled. America is gradually accumulating a magnificent store of hymns—deeply religious, very tender and poetic; some of these are by her greatest poets. These richly deserve consideration. An ideal collection cannot be formed without a large infusion of such Transatlantic hymns. Many an old hymn which has nothing but association and age to favour it might well be displaced to make room for finer hymns from this source.

The Church of England has followed Nonconformists in *adopting* hymns for use in her worship. The time will probably come in which she will follow them by the inclusion in her hymnals of hymns by men whose productions are as conspicuous for their poetry as for their doctrinal decisiveness, whose doctrine, indeed, is fired and fused, as is the case with most of the Psalms, by their poetic inspiration.

The last quarter of a century has seen a marvellous development in the hymnody of the Establishment; the next will probably witness a still further development in the direction I have named.

W. GARRETT HORDER.

SCEPTICAL NOVELS BY WOMEN.

NO. I.

ROBERT ELSMERE.

PART II.

THE readers of my first paper on *Robert Elsmere* may have thought the second has been unduly delayed. May I say in exculpation that the claims of more pressing duties, the continual drawback of ill-health, and the wish to do full justice to the argument have all thrown me back? Mistaken my view may be, but not through lack of care or study. While re-perusing the novel, I took great pains to note all that could help to a juster assessment of the *pros* and *cons* in regard to orthodox Christian belief, and its theistic substitute set forth in *Robert Elsmere*.

Some of the headings under which I gathered the more salient points were—Robert Elsmere's character; the influences which determined his religious views and work; Catherine Elsmere's religion, both as regards herself and its effect upon her husband; and that belief in God on which the authoress lays so much stress. There are other matters not at all devoid of interest or lacking in importance, but the above will indicate the basis of my present remarks and argument.

That word "argument" reminds me that in one or two criticisms I read on my opening paper, there was an expression of some regret that I had not dealt more with the reasonings of the authoress of *Robert Elsmere*. I must confess to a little disappointment that my suggestions produced so little conviction; for my purpose was far more to indicate the duty and the consequences of substituting the human for the purely intellectual way of regarding all such books, than to deal with one particular novel. Whatever may be the results produced, for good or for evil, by *Robert Elsmere*, they cannot be compared with those which would be produced if,

to take but one of my suggestions, the conscience were put higher than the intellect, if we judged men and women's writings more by their moral motives than by their arguments.

It is perfectly true that thousands who read books are influenced by the moral motives. But this is when they are, as they think, off their guard. As soon as a sense of responsibility begins to awaken within them, they immediately call themselves to account for their failure in not having made the argument the principal point, as if it were their plain duty to make their praise or blame turn, at any rate primarily, on that alone. Now, is not this in effect the expression of the conviction that a wrong belief is worse than a perverted conscience? The truer line is surely to give moral considerations the first place, and then to proceed to those which are intellectual; or better still, because human nature is more than conscience *plus* intellect, to regard the matter from an inclusively human point of view, taking care that the governing force is conscience.

Having said so much, not in self-defence, but in the hope that the reiteration may produce more effect than the original suggestion, I may now point out that I expressly undertook to deal with the argument, or the supposed argument, of *Robert Elsmere* in a concluding paper. Strongly as I feel that the argument should come second, it would be unwise indeed to overlook it altogether.

"But is it true that 'real argument there is none' in this book?" Well, that depends on what is meant by argument. If it means the starting with accepted facts as premises, and then working out conclusions from these, according to strict logical methods, then there is no argument in *Robert Elsmere*. Of course I was not the first to point this out; the fact is so patent that it seems to have struck a large percentage of readers. Indeed, I have rarely observed in any like case such unanimity of opinion. And yet doubtless to many the effect is far otherwise. They read the book in almost total ignorance of the questions discussed, they note and are infected by the moral earnestness of the writer. They observe the many marks of her possessing a

powerful mind stored with unusual erudition. They see her laying down the law on many crucial points—*e.g.*, the possibility of miracles, the results of historical criticism, the varying evidential value of testimony—and they see too that her views on all these things are stated to have been overwhelmingly convincing to the candid mind of the hero of the story. And so there is danger, real danger, *under certain conditions*—which I will deal with before I conclude this paper—of their being carried away.

But when with sober mind we examine the real force of the argument, we discover that hardly anything remains but this, that the late Professor Green, of Balliol (if not unintentionally misrepresented), did hold, and that the authoress does hold certain convictions, and that that should be enough for the readers. The argument then is as follows:—

The convictions of Professor Green and Mrs. Ward must be warrant enough for the readers of *Robert Elsmere*.

The convictions of Professor Green and of Mrs. Ward are such as are displayed in the later career of the hero.

Therefore the conscientious and thoughtful reader must give up his orthodox Christianity and embrace an ardent but most shadowy theism.

I have in the above syllogism said nothing as to the Squire's convictions, or those of Robert Elsmere, because they only represent those of the authoress; whereas the convictions of Professor Green and Mrs. Ward are solid facts; and his, at any rate, few wise people can afford to altogether despise. Something of this kind of thought appears very prominently in one place in the story (p. 536 of the one volume edition), where the hero is standing by the open grave of Mr. Grey [*i.e.*, Professor Green], and meditates on "the triumphant outbursts of the Christian service." "Man's hope," he thought, "has grown humbler than this. It keeps now a more modest mien in the presence of the Eternal Mystery; but is it in truth less real, less sustaining? Let Grey's trust answer for me."

I do not blame that tendency to rest on the authority of great souls. Doubtless Mrs. Humphry Ward has been greatly

influenced by the convictions of Professor Green; in her dedication she speaks of her "faith about" him, and, so, many of her readers have been much influenced by *her* convictions. Let all due weight be given to both, but let due weight be also given to the convictions of Him, Who spoke and lived and died as no other man ever did. If the argument is to rest—as in the main I think it does, and ever will—on the convictions of great souls Mrs. Ward must not complain if we much prefer, if we infinitely prefer the convictions of Jesus Christ to hers and Professor Green's. This is the point on which Dr. Wace so wisely based his argument against "Agnosticism" at the Manchester Church Congress, and which, in replying in the *Nineteenth Century* of March to Professor Huxley's most misleading attack in the preceding number, he has substantiated and enforced. I trust I may be allowed to quote some few words of my own, in a paper on "Agnosticism Opposed to all Noble Aspirations," in the *Church Sunday School Magazine* of January, 1884—"It comes to this, that Jesus Christ said one thing, and Professor Huxley and Herbert Spencer say the opposite."

I have already referred to Mrs. Ward laying down the law on certain crucial points. Take first *the possibility of miracles*, which is put aside as if it were a mark of ignorance and almost imbecility to defend it. In the account of Robert's lecture of which so much is made comes the following (pp. 494-95):—

"'There,' he said slowly, 'in the unbroken sequences of nature, in the physical history of the world, in the long history of man, physical, intellectual, moral—*there* lies the revelation of God. There is no other, my friends!'

"Then, while the room hung on his words, he entered on a brief exposition of the text, '*Miracles do not happen*,' re-stating Hume's old argument, and adding to it some of the most cogent of those modern arguments drawn from literature, from history, from the comparative study of religions and religious evidence, which were not practically at Hume's disposal, but which are now affecting the popular mind as Hume's reasoning could never have affected it.

"We are now able to show how miracle, or the belief in

it, which is the same thing, comes into being. The study of miracle in all nations, and under all conditions, yields everywhere the same results. Miracle may be the child of imagination, of love, nay, of a passionate sincerity, but invariably it lives with ignorance and is withered by knowledge!"

This really appears at first sight to be a logical argument, but when looked at it is seen to be a collection of statements. If these statements are true, then the conclusion must be that of Mrs. Ward. But to the best of my knowledge—for I do not wish to lay down the law—many of the statements are baseless, indeed the very opposite of the truth.

It is almost impossible to suggest any *rational* explanation of the existence in the Gospels of the records of our Lord's miracles except the existence of the miracles. And I say this in the light of the rationalistic inquiries of the last hundred years. It is their trend which leads me to make the assertion strongly. That is to say, the tendency of modern inquiry is to make the evidence for the Gospel miracles stronger than it was before the inquiry began. Formerly it was mainly a matter of unquestioning faith; now it is also a matter of almost certain knowledge. At least that is what all my inquiries have led me to hold as the only reasonable position when *all* the facts are taken into account.

To this question of miracles I shall return again, but I will now deal with what lies at the base of Mrs. Ward's view, *i.e.*, the superior trustworthiness of critics in regard to the discovery of the real facts; and here it will save trouble if I quote from my first Boyle Lecture for 1888.

"In *Robert Elsmere*," I said, "Mrs. Ward writes with most amusing naïvete, 'Then' (*i.e.*, after M. Rénan, the Protestant of rigid orthodoxy, and the liberal Anglican have all had their say), 'then appears the critic, having no interests to serve, no *parti-pris* to defend.' Surely the authoress, who in her argument is nothing if not historical, has strangely overlooked the most striking fact of New Testament criticism, *viz.*, that the prejudices of a Paulus, a Strauss, a Baur were only equalled by their—*failure*."

It has been suggested that Mrs. Ward was advised by her

publishers to omit much that might have made for her view. If so, her argument has suffered unjustly in the interests of literary proportion; but we are now in a fair position to recover anything suppressed, for in the *Nineteenth Century* of March our authoress had a long article, *The New Reformation*, dealing with this very subject. My own impression is that that article will, and ought to, produce an unfavourable impression, and in this respect. With more elucidation of her reasons there is also a most unpleasant increase in arrogance of tone, and she has greatly added to the grave offence she gave by her statement in *Robert Elsmere* (p. 354): "Westcott, for instance, who means so much nowadays to the English religious world, first isolates Christianity from all the other religious phenomena of the world, and then argues upon its details. You might as well isolate English jurisprudence, and discuss its details, without any reference to Teutonic custom or Roman law! You may be as logical or as learned as you like within the limits chosen, but the whole result is false! You treat Christian witness and Biblical literature as you would treat no other witness, and no other literature in the world. And you cannot show cause enough. For your reasons depend on the very witness under dispute. And so you go on arguing in a circle *ad infinitum*."

The Dean of Windsor having remonstrated with her—*Contemporary Review*, October, 1888, *The Religious Novel*—for speaking in such disparaging terms of the great Cambridge philosopher, theologian, and scholar, Mrs. Ward has somewhat fully defended her view (*Nineteenth Century*, 477-78), and I cannot hardly help applying to her statements the word impertinent—she writes with such a quiet but decided assumption of superiority, treating the great thinker *de haut en bas*. She clearly does not perceive her own deep prejudice. She will not for a moment allow the possibility that Christ could have been more than a very good man. And therefore she drags down the records of Him and of His works to the level of what she sees outside.

The Christian finds himself in the presence of a Personality which strikes him as utterly unlike all other human personali-

ties. He is unable to describe the fact before him except as a moral miracle. And yet Mrs. Ward says, "You cannot show cause enough." What evidence can possibly surpass the Christian evidence? The Personality which seems all Divine while also all human, with the whole environment—I mean a great deal more than the miracles proper, for there is the Book, the Prophecies, the Jews, the Resurrection, the Church, the witness within each true Christian—with, I say, *the whole environment to match*. And we are gravely rated because we do not overlook all this, and because we *cannot* put other religious founders or sacred books on the same level with Jesus or the Bible. Surely in any matter of human interest Dean Mansel's words, "Affection is part of insight; it is wanted for gaining due acquaintance with the facts of the case," are amongst the wisest and truest ever uttered; yet our authoress (*Nineteenth Century*, pp. 459, 477-78) finds fault with Canon Westcott and others for learning from their "affection"!

But I must now hasten on to deal with what is probably the strongest view entertained by the authoress—the evidential value of testimony varying with each particular age.

"'Oh, well,' said the Squire hastily, 'it is a book I planned just after I took my Doctor's degree at Berlin. It struck me then as the great want of modern scholarship. It is a History of Evidence, or rather, more strictly, "A History of Testimony."'

"Robert started. The library flashed into his mind, and Langham's figure in the long grey coat sitting on the stool.

"'A great subject,' he said slowly, 'a magnificent subject. How have you conceived it, I wonder?'

"'Simply from the standpoint of evolution, of development. The philosophical value of the subject is enormous. You must have considered it, of course; every historian must. But few people have any idea in detail of the amount of light which the history of human witness in the world, systematically carried through, throws on the history of the human mind; that is to say, on the history of ideas'" (p. 314).

And then a very anti-Christian discourse follows.

Now such statements are calculated to greatly impress the unwary. The opinion of the profoundly erudite Roger Wendover would carry much weight. But, then, this is really Mrs. Ward's opinion, which is a different matter.

It is perhaps hardly to the exact point, though it may throw considerable light on the whole of Mrs. Ward's views, and certainly ought not to be overlooked in these discussions, that *the* writer on Evidence of that nation of jurists, the people of the United States of America, has dealt with one large portion of it. I have before me the title page of a book, which besides a *Harmony of the Gospels, &c.*, contains *An Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists, by the Rules of Evidence, administered in Courts of Justice*, with an account of *The Trial of Jesus*. By Simon Greenleaf, LL.D., Dane Professor of Law in Harvard University. I cannot help thinking that most critics are unaware how absurdly they traverse the rules of *legal* evidence in regard to the genuineness of documents by their demands of proof of the authorship of our Four Gospels. At any rate, there can be no doubt as to the value of the favourable judgment of this admired and standard authority.

But saying no more at present on that point, we may well briefly consider the application of the Squire's, *i.e.*, Mrs. Ward's, theory as to the varying force of testimony.

In general the truth of it goes without saying. The question for *us* is how to apply it to the Christian records. Mrs. Ward's view is that the times of Christ were of such a character that the value of testimony was then almost *nil*. Now it bears on this matter to note that Mrs. Ward—I have heard it on good authority—is an historical expert in some mediæval periods. Also that (*Robert Elsmere*, p. 197) Robert in describing his historical researches to Langham said, "So I took my Final Schools' history for a basis, and started on the Empire, especially the decay of the Empire. Some day I mean to take up one of the episodes in *the great birth of Europe—the makings of France, I think, most lively. It seems to lead farthest and tell most.*" (The italics are mine).

Well then, are we to regard the testimony of the time of Christ as having the value of that of our own century, or that of the darkest period of mediæval Europe? And there will come the farther question, whether there is anything in our Christian records which manifestly stamps them with the hall-mark of unalloyed veracity.

First then as to the *age*. Was it an age of readiness to accept anything and everything without examination? My own impression, which I give only for what it is worth, is that the times of Jesus Christ in many respects remarkably agreed with those in which we live. Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem, it has often occurred to me, might well find his parallel, not indeed in character and act, but in his mental environment, in an English proconsul in India, say the Viceroy at Simla. Could an English sceptic find a better expression of his present feelings than Pilate's "What is truth?" Have not our English rationalists excellent forerunners in the Sadducees? And are not the deniers of the Resurrection well matched by those Stoics and Epicurean philosophers who derided St. Paul on Mars' Hill?

"But then, you know, every religious hero was credited with supernatural powers. They lived in an atmosphere of marvels." Well, I reply, that may be so outside the Bible; but I do not find it so within its covers. It is hardly possible to imagine a man more likely to be credited with the power of working miracles than John the Baptist. Yet not only is no miracle of any kind ascribed to him, but the writer of the Fourth Gospel distinctly states, "John did no miracle," and does so not on his own authority, but as the record of the current opinion of the contemporaries of John and Jesus.

And this leads me to the second point, the unapproachable truthfulness of the Bible. The collapse of the attacks of rationalists has been very largely due to the intense sense of the veracity of the Gospels which every high-minded man must experience as he studies them. One often hears of the effect produced in a court of justice by the look, and tone, and manner of a witness. Now the New Testament

has produced just such an effect on myriads of thoughtful minds and honest hearts. We are too diffident in our defence. *The Bible is really the standard of testimony.*

As I read *The Service of Man* or *Robert Elsmere*, I decline to regard either book as written with any willing unfairness (I have often heard both denounced as very unfair). They bear to me the marks of genuine conviction. I might be mistaken *there*. But the New Testament is no lately published work. It has been read for nearly 2,000 years by such persons as I have just referred to, and almost with one consent they have been convinced of its really super-human veracity. It may be said that the writers were honest; yet they might have been mistaken. Hardly so; if, as modern criticism has almost proved, the Gospels were written about the time we supposed. For it was the honesty of the sacred writers which compelled the earlier rationalists, with their strong *parti-pris* against miracles, to insist upon a long period of legendary growth, and therefore to postdate the Gospels. *Their* argument recoils on their successors, whom one discovery after another has compelled to assign a much earlier dating than is consistent with the mythic theory.

Besides, St. Paul's undoubted Epistles, dating about A.D. 55, show what was very early thought about Christ, indeed long before the time of their actual composition, for the Apostle to the Gentiles was converted only a few years after the death of Christ. *We* find it difficult to see the wonder of such writings as *Romans*, *Corinthians* 1 and 2, and *Galatians*. But suppose they stood alone, with no Gospels to explain them. Why it would be as necessary, in a strictly scientific point of view, to look for just such a God-man as we believe in, as it was natural for a Leverrier or an Adams to search for the unseen Neptune, which alone could account for the perturbation of the planet, till then regarded as the outermost member of our solar system.

But then may it be said, "Mrs. Ward speaks of Jesus holding a view as to *Daniel* inconsistent with the facts" (pp. 320-21). I reply, There is, I allow, a difficulty, and I

cannot remove it. But recollect *you* are not *sure* when Daniel was written ; you are not sure what Jesus meant by endorsing it. But *we are* sure that, to say the least, a God-like man held the highest views as to the value of the Old Testament ; and after the miserable collapse of past attacks on the New Testament it is your wisdom not to think of attacking it afresh by an innuendo against Him of Whom the New Testament is full.

It happens that in the very number of the *Nineteenth Century* to which I have already referred so often, there is one of the most conclusive evidences of the mistake that an honest man, full of prejudice, may make as regards the value of the testimony of the Gospels. I refer to Professor Huxley's article, "The Value of Witness to the Miraculous." The state of mind in which he must have penned it is simply amazing. He positively chooses the most hopelessly unlike period to illustrate the times of Jesus. I have already drawn attention to the known researches of Mrs. Ward and the supposed studies of Robert Elsmere. And now we find the Professor actually unearthing *The History of the Translation of the Blessed Martyrs of Christ, SS. Marcellinus and Petrus*, by Eginhard, a courtier of Charlemagne, who wrote about A.D. 830—as a commentary on the Gospels ! At any rate, it might have been supposed that we should have had set before us some *very saintly lives*, apparently truthfully delineated, but with an admixture of gross superstitions and incredible marvels. Whereas what is connected with the superstitions and marvels is a simple record of *lying and stealing* ; on which the Professor's own comment is, "For a parallel to these transactions one must read a police report of the doings of a 'long firm,' or of a set of horse-coupers ; yet Eginhard seems to be aware of nothing, but that he has been rather badly used by his friend Hildoin, and the 'nequissimus nebulo' Hunus !" (pp. 147-48).

Would it have been believed possible that this degrading story is produced as an absolute parallel to our sacred records, so far as the validity of its testimony is concerned ? Mr. Huxley draws special attention to the "mental and

moral habits" (p. 450, Note) of Eginhard. He cannot mean that the "moral" habits of the sacred writers were of the same stamp! And if the difference in morality was so immense, why should he assume that the mental habits were the same. Yet he roundly argues, "If the evidence of Eginhard is insufficient to lead reasonable men to believe in the miracles he relates, *à fortiori* the evidence afforded by the Gospels and the Acts must be so" (p. 450). I regard this comparison as grossly insulting to the Professor's readers, and—I say it with grave sorrow—his own mental and moral habits, in regard to criticism, seem to have been sadly lowered by the unfortunate views he glories in holding. I deeply regret that such an article should be associated with a name which many Christians besides myself have wished to hold in honour.

To return to Mrs. Ward. I ask her to be a little more sure of the age in which she lives, and to which she attributes so keen a scientific, critical, and historical insight. This *is* a scientific age; yet look at spiritualism, and the great scientists who have more or less endorsed it. She may reply, "The worse for them!" I reply, The worse for your view as to the superiority of this age. Or rather, Are you not mistaken as to the cause of the variation or the value of testimony? Should you not rather look to the character of the acts of the persons to whom and by whom testimony is now borne or was borne 1,800 years ago? If the New Testament set before us such marvels as spiritualists believe in, you might reject them and spiritualism too. But, as I have already pointed out, Christianity sets before us a Book, a People, a Preparation, a Prophecy, a Person, a Life, a Death, a Resurrection, a Coming of the Holy Ghost, and a new Spiritual Life, still existing and increasing, of the type of 1 Corinthians xiii. And we say, and think we say justly, It is all of one piece, the whole hangs together; or rather, it is all vitally one; and the only thing I have omitted to name—Miracles—must be added, because all those other things, being superhuman and supernatural, require that there should have been (*natural* in their sphere) superhuman and supernatural actions also.

One other matter raised by *Robert Elsmere* needs perhaps a few words. We have, in the main, been considering the reasonableness of the orthodox view, and we have, I hope, found it amply justified. But what of Mrs. Ward's belief? Is *it* reasonable; can it claim our allegiance? Well, I have already named the main ground for the claim; we are to accept it because it was held by Professor Green, because it is held by our authoress. But why, to use Mr. Andrew Lang's admirable term, we should be content to rest all our hopes and aspirations on that particular "ledge," on which Mrs. Ward thinks we can find safety, does not otherwise appear.

Very vehement and earnest are her expressions of conviction in the existence and claims of God, but the reasons for both are far to seek—I mean in her point of view.

Perhaps no better passage can be found to illustrate Mrs. Ward's view than that I take from p. 408. It has a special value because it really throws light on the whole career of Robert Elsmere. "Abstract thought," as Mr. Grey saw, "had had comparatively little to do with Elsmere's relinquishment of the Church of England. But as soon as the Christian bases of faith were overthrown, that faith had naturally to find for itself other supports and attachments. For faith itself—in God and a spiritual order—had been so wrought into the nature by years of reverent and adoring living that nothing could destroy it. With Elsmere, as with all men of religious temperament, belief in Christianity and faith in God had not at the outset been a matter of reasoning at all, but of sympathy, feeling, association, daily experience. Then the intellect had broken in and destroyed or transformed the belief in Christianity. But after the crash, *faith* emerged as strong as ever, only craving and eager to make a fresh peace, a fresh compact with the reason."

A multitude of comments on this passage crowd into one's mind, which the limits of this paper forbid my naming; but it may be well to ask whether Elsmere would have had that "faith in God" apart from his "belief in Christianity," or whether "reverent and adoring living" is possible in highly

civilised and cultured societies apart from Christianity. "Sympathy, feeling, association, daily experience;" I hardly know exactly what importance *Mrs. Ward* assigns to them. In the light of a long and careful study of human nature, I assign to them a very high place in the matter of reasonable belief. But this is surely plain, that what Mrs. Ward calls *faith* derived its life from these, and that *Elsmere's* abiding faith really rested on these. That is, he mainly owed his theism to Christianity. What availing answer a de-Christianised theism has to agnosticism, positivism, pantheism, pessimism, there is no evidence to show that our writer has even considered, but I imagine that they would make short work of her defence. The fact is, that the arguments of a Martineau and a Green, admirable as they are, fail both in argument and in uplifting force, so long as they are simply, theistic; it is Christian theism which gives them completeness and vital energy. A certain sub-consciousness of the vagueness of Mrs. Ward's theism occasionally crops up; on the one occasion when it clearly emerges, it strikes a chill into one's very heart, coupled as it is with Robert's dying moments.

"I often lie here, Flaxman, wondering at the way in which men become the slaves of some metaphysical word—*personality* or *intelligence*, or what not! What meaning can they have as applied to *God*? Herbert Spencer is quite right. We no sooner attempt to define what we mean by a Personal God than we lose ourselves in labyrinths of language and logic. But why attempt it at all? I like that French saying, "*Quand on me demande ce que c'est que Dieu, je l'ignore; quand on ne me le demande pas, je le sais très bien!*" No, we cannot realize Him in words—we can only live in Him, and die to Him!" (p. 603).

No wonder just before (p. 600) we read, "Yet he did not talk much of immortality, of reunion. It was like a scrupulous child that dares not take for granted more than its father has allowed it to know. At the same time it was plain to those about him that the only realities to him in a world of shadows were God—love—the soul."

But *why* realities to any one else who had not had the

advantages of, in most respects, a peculiarly happy experience! Reduce Christ to a purely human figure, who, by an accident, is the ideal for Europe ("Just as the lives of Buddha and of Mohammed are wrought ineffaceably into the civilisation of Africa and Asia, so the life of Jesus is wrought ineffaceably into the higher civilisation, the nobler social conceptions, of Europe"—pp. 495-96); etherialise the conception of God till you know nothing about Him which can bring comfort and strength to an agnostic as to life after death, and then go forth to a world lying in sin, and sorrow, and bereavement, and preach that Gospel to it, and see what fruit you will have of your labour!

"The only 'articles' of the new faith" were (p. 577) "*In Thee, O Eternal have I put my trust. 'This do in remembrance of Me.'*" Sustaining, constraining words to Christians, but to the "New Brotherhood of Christ" nerveless. For how, in real life, shall men put their trust in a shadowy abstraction, which its apostles cannot in any way define? Why should men be called to a perpetual remembrance of one, whom to worship Mrs. Ward regards as idolatry? There is more of real argument in a few words of Catherine's than in all Mrs. Ward's suggestions and reasonings. "'How can that help them?' she said abruptly. 'Your historical Christ, Robert, will never win souls. If He was God, every word you speak will insult Him. If He was man, He was not a good man!'" (p. 480).

The fact is that theism apart from orthodox Christianity is of almost all systems the least logical. Unitarians are generally supposed to lay special claim to their faith being based on intellectual conviction, while that of ordinary Christians is a blind and uncritical faith. I have taken some pains to verify this claim, and I have come to the opinion that Unitarians have not got any solid rock of certainty to stand upon, and that they are, as Unitarians, utterly defenceless against all those assaults which we may sum up in the word "pessimism," which are the only assaults worth seriously meeting. There is, I believe, no defence except in the Cross

of Christ, and that the Unitarian has evacuated of all its power. He is, quite unconsciously, led by the nobility of his aspirations and the sympathy of his heart to hold such a creed as he professes, but on the intellectual side he is weak. He shelters himself behind that very system which he denounces as idolatrous and unreasoning, but which in its calm strength protects him from the tornado that would sweep his own creed into the abyss.

And now, in conclusion, I again return to the consideration of the effect that this novel is likely to produce. Well, I have pointed out its many excellences and I have drawn attention to its grave defects. I have also stated my view that the *sum total* of its influence ought to be for good. Many a novel of perfect orthodoxy and free from actual immoralities might do much more real harm by its lack of a high and noble ideal. But am I justified in setting forth that, certainly unusual, view of the book? I imagine some one asking, "If the faith of many who read *Robert Elsmere* is shaken thereby, is not the book a dangerous book?" I reply by another question, "To *whom* is it dangerous in that way?" For a much more important consideration than *Robert Elsmere* itself is the reason why readers are so liable to be led astray by it.

They are liable, either (*a*) because they have no real hold of Christ with *all* their nature; or (*b*) because they are utterly uninstructed in Apologetics, and have no common sense.

(*a*) Supposing a person is a true Christian, believing in (*into* in the Greek) Christ, joined to Him by heart affection, willing devotion, intellectual conviction, and a bleeding and sin-stricken conscience—could such a book dislodge him from his faith? I fancy that not seeing a sufficient reply at once, and not thinking it honest to disregard the difficulty, he would be pained and *bewildered*—but not really *shaken*. And it seems to me a blot in the character of Robert Elsmere that he could have surrendered his creed as he did. He suffered greatly, but what would have been involved in his losing that view of Christ which ought to have been necessitated by his former belief, was more than suffering. It should have been

torment and spiritual ruin. And before he could have come to that pass, he would surely have had time to see his hasty intellectual mistakes in regard to the supposed weakness of Christian testimony.

But I must confess I am not sure whether I have taken a perfectly correct view of Robert Elsmere's character. In my first paper I spoke very warmly of him, though pointing out certain grave defects. A longer consideration of him and of the book has somewhat lowered my estimate of both. Had he any business to be happy in the society of such people as Madame de Netteville gathered round her? Had he any right to be a constant companion of such a man as the Squire? From the beginning to the end there is no evidence that he had any deep sense of the sinfulness of sin; and where that does not exist I doubt whether a Christian faith in Christ and God can long exist. Much, too, of Robert's conduct to his wife was inconsiderate to the last degree. Indeed, the more I study the character of both, the more I am struck with the comparative shallowness of the husband and the splendid nobility of the wife.

(*b*) There is the other alternative. And what does that mean but that Christian people are so *ignorant* of what has been written by hundreds of defenders of the faith, and are so *lacking in ordinary prudence* that, while they know, or ought to know, that they know nothing about the points discussed, yet because they cannot produce the reply they will surrender their faith without a word? Surely common sense would say, "Think 'once, twice, thrice' on so solemn a matter, and of course consult some one who *does* know."

Yes, it is not *Robert Elsmere* that is the *cause* of the mischief, though it may be the *occasion*. The cause is either (*a*) the lack of true Christianity, or (*b*) blank ignorance and stupidity. And for these the clergy and other ministers of religion are gravely responsible. If the writing of *Robert Elsmere* shall lead to greater attention being drawn to both of these serious defects, it will not have been written in vain.

C. LLOYD ENGSTRÖM.

PRINCIPAL TULLOCH.

"THE lives of the leaders of modern thought" had a place of their own in the Prospectus of this Review. Principal Tulloch may fairly be enrolled on this list; and Mrs. Oliphant's recently published *Memoir* furnishes ample material.

It is perhaps worth noticing, *in limine*, that the little University of St. Andrew's has supplied the subjects of two such biographies, issued almost contemporaneously, as Mrs. Oliphant's *Memoir of Principal Tulloch* and Professor Knight's *Principal Shairp and his Friends*. One is rather surprised at the reticence of each of these two books as to the subject of the other. In Principal Shairp's *Life* Principal Tulloch is rarely mentioned; in Principal Tulloch's *Life* we hear a little more of Principal Shairp, but his name does not occur above half-a-dozen times in the entire volume.

Of the literary quality of Mrs. Oliphant's *Memoir* it is scarcely necessary to speak. Obviously the biographer of Edward Irving has bent her whole strength to produce a book that can stand side by side with one of the most delicious and masterly biographies the English language holds, the *Life of Edward Irving*. Her present subject is far less attractive intrinsically. It lacks the excitement, the picturesqueness of Edward Irving's career. In Tulloch's life there was nothing strange or novel. Less scope, therefore, is afforded for artistic treatment than in the authoress's earlier biography. And there are other differences. Irving moved in a wider sphere than Tulloch, and was more a man of action than he. It were a feat beyond all literary skill to render the quiet, academic life as interesting and impressive as that of the brilliant orator, the enthusiastic preacher, the strangely misled genius. Yet the *Memoir of Principal Tulloch* has characteristics of its own—tender, lingering touches of a loving hand,

personal reminiscences that pleasantly make the most of small incidents, and a certain glow shedding continually subdued brightness and warmth. The two biographies certainly may bear each other company. One great advantage the present volume enjoys. The authoress came into sufficiently close contact with Tulloch to study the man intimately and minutely, and to write of him with affectionate appreciation. Yet she stood sufficiently aloof from him to judge fairly of his proportions, and to utter genuine sentiments and opinions with the freedom of one outside the circle of the family.

Excellent as this *Memoir* is, it is marred by one serious defect. We see the eager, persevering student, the University professor and officer, the successful author, the royal chaplain, the ecclesiastical leader, the busy man of affairs, and even the frequent occupant of the pulpit; but we are always in danger of forgetting that we are reading the life of a sworn minister of the Gospel, or even a decided Christian. Not that the element of experimental religion is wholly absent, but it very rarely crops up to the surface. Mrs. Oliphant assures us that she has suppressed numerous records of spiritual emotion, aspiration, and struggle as "too sacred for the public eye." She shall state her own reasons for this reticence. After citing the close of one of Tulloch's letters to his wife—"I feel deeply how irreligious, impatient, and irritable, and merely earthly some of my feelings have been, but I have had more serious feelings to-day, though I cannot say much about them. There is undoubtedly a deep comfort in casting one's self upon God, and leaving issues to Him. If we had only more faith and living feeling of His presence to do this. I cannot take up the language and feeling of many on such subjects, but I would wish to have a deeper experience of the realities which I preach"—she comments:

"I may add that many utterances of the same description are to be found in the occasional diaries, kept from time to time, scattered through various little books, now containing the musings of a few days, now a longer record of months, which are full of devout aspirations and many prayers—struggles against the errors of temper, which he

felt to be his besetting sin, and earnest endeavours after a more and more deep realization of things unseen. There are some readers who would perhaps prefer a fuller revelation of these private musings to the actual records of his life ; but the secret prayers and aspirations of the soul are at once too sacred and too similar to other outpourings of religious feeling to justify, I think, the tearing asunder of the veil in which nature has shrouded us. He would himself have deeply disliked any such invasion of his privacy. 'I cannot say much about them' is his sentiment. With many of those who feel most deeply this incapability is the most strong" (p. 137).

Unquestionably this plea has force, whether we regard it as a general principle or as peculiarly applicable to Tulloch's case. It arouses in some minds an almost instinctive sympathy. The real point at issue, however, is whether religious biography should be written at all. If all records of devout emotion and communion with God ought to be left for ever in their original privacy, religious biography becomes an impertinence, an outrage, a sacrilege. The purpose of a memoir must determine the extent of such revelations, and in some degree it is a matter of the taste and the judgement. Two considerations, however, must not be overlooked. To one we have already adverted. The life of a Christian minister cannot rightly be treated as though his ministerial character and functions were subordinate to other more important duties and activities ; and his biography ought not to be composed so as to convey the impression, under protest though it be, that insufficient thought was given to the practical and experimental aspects of Christianity. On the other point we must dwell lightly, though it cannot be left altogether unnoticed. Mrs. Oliphant has never manifested much sympathy with that side of genuine piety which concerns itself with the discipline of the heart and the cultivation of conscious fellowship with Christ. It is not too much to say that she has failed conspicuously to understand it. Witness the "evangelical monsters"¹ of her earlier novels. The bearing of this fact does not require to be indicated.

¹ The phrase is Professor Blackie's.—*Cunningham Lectures*, 1888, p. 182.

John Tulloch entered the ministry of the Church of Scotland in 1845. He was then twenty-two years of age. A more favourable opportunity for a young man of ability to make his mark could not be desired. The disruption had not long been consummated. So many of the men of light and leading had seceded, and so great was the popular enthusiasm on their behalf, that the old Kirk seemed to deserve the name that was bestowed upon it, half contemptuously, half hopefully, "the Residuary Church." Capable, forceful men could not but rise to the surface. Unprecedented room offered itself for a career. From the first, young Tulloch was fully resolved upon distinguishing himself. He coveted a professorial chair, and trusted sooner or later to win it. During his college course he had achieved some reputation for both physical and mental powers; and he knew himself to be possessed of higher abilities than he had yet displayed. His attitude towards the Disruption is curiously characteristic. He witnessed the procession which signalled the actual formation of the breach. He calls the secession "awfully serious," adding "God alone knows what are to be the consequences," and "many are perfectly astonished at such a sacrifice for principle." But so little did he think of following the example thus set that the very next sentence reads, "Had I been ready, I might have had, I daresay, my choice of a kirk." More than once, in after life, he paid a generous tribute to the conscientiousness and heroism of the men who risked every worldly prospect and comfort, and surrendered much both substantially and sentimentally valuable, rather than yield "the crown-rights of the Lord Jesus," as they apprehended them. But whilst the movement was in progress he felt but faint attraction towards it. Dr. Dickson, one of his early friends, writes of this period, "For a considerable time his sympathies, which in ordinary politics were towards the Whigs, or almost Radical party, induced him to take a lively interest in the Non-intrusion controversy, and tended at first towards the views of those who subsequently formed the Free Church. But he became satisfied that the claims put forward by them for exclusive jurisdiction, under

cover of the so-called Headship of Christ, were not dissimilar to those of the Papacy, and inconsistent with a due recognition of the peace of the State." Practically this position differed infinitesimally from that held by his father. The elder Tulloch, minister of Tibbermuir, encouraged the champions of Non-intrusion to visit his parish, presided at one of their meetings, and expressed general approval of their resistance. But he would not follow them in the secession, and they themselves admitted that he had never led them to expect that he would do so.

Probably Mrs. Oliphant is right when she says of Dr. Dickson's testimony, "This seems almost too formal a conclusion to have been arrived at in the heat of the moment." It carries evidence of calm reflection and investigation. Quite possibly some such thought floated vaguely in the young man's mind, and afterwards took shape and precision. In 1843 he appears to have accepted it as a matter of course that he should become a clergyman, and that his ministry should be exercised in the Established Church of Scotland. Until his ordination was close at hand, when the solemn significance of the service awed and quickened him, he treats the sacred office simply as his destined profession. A sadly amusing outburst of petulance chronicles the to him surprising refusal of the Presbytery of Perth to issue his licence whilst he was still under age. "It will affect my prospects," he complains, and has no conception that there is either Providence or wisdom in the delay.

In common fairness, something must be said on the other side. When the lucrative and dignified charge of Arbroath is offered to him by the Crown, he hesitates and finally declines the responsibility from a sense of his unfitness for so onerous a cure of souls. After his installation as assistant-minister at Dundee, and some experience of pastoral work, he writes to an intimate friend:

"I solemnly confess to you that had I, previous to taking licence, viewed the office with the same feelings as I have done since, I could not, if I know my own mind, have taken it. That I now really regret having done so I do not say, nor do I humbly conceive

that to be implied in what I do say, as it would be very contrary to what I tacitly expressed in my ordination vows. So strongly, however, and so painfully did these feelings sway me for a time, that I was almost at the giving-up point. That that has not been the result has arisen from many combined influences weighing with me. I have no time to explain them, as you, I daresay, have little desire to hear them explained."

From this time may be dated a worthier and more serious view of the ministry. But the pastorate always seemed irksome to him, however conscientiously he endeavoured to discharge its obligations. Always did he eagerly long for a professoriate.

Friction and awkwardness having arisen in connection with the curacy at Dundee, Tulloch was ordained to a district church with a species of parish specially carved out for him. Shortly after this settlement he married Miss Hindmarsh. The union proved thoroughly happy. Few men have been more blessed in their wives than Tulloch in his. Despite his bodily and intellectual vigour, he needed some one on whom he could lean, on whose help and sympathy he could depend at any moment, who could appreciate the tenderness of his nature in the midst of his continuous and rather exacting demands. All this, and more than all, he found in Mrs. Tulloch. No sooner had the young couple taken up their abode in their new home than the pecuniary burdens began, which they were never wholly free from to their lives ends. Without a word of warning the Town Council cut down the endowment of the district church from £275 to £105 per annum. Henceforth Tulloch continually complains of his limited income. There is no trace of pinching poverty. He can always find money for holidays and travels. And there is nothing sordid or querulous about his grumbling. Indeed, he rather makes a statement than grieves or murmurs. But he is never satisfied with his financial position. In later life his income, "A. K. H. B." declares, was at least equal to that of an English dean. But the sense of insufficiency was never absent. He had been married some eighteen months when a slight illness induced him to seek rest and quiet in Germany.

No record remains to show that his three month's visit to that country affected his theological views. One of his objects was to become more familiar with the language. Previously he had spent some time and pains over it, and he had experienced the fascination of German Biblical and theological literature, then just beginning to exert a perceptible influence on some of the younger and more scholarly of Scotch ministers. It is hardly conceivable that his stay in Germany did not add force to this attraction.

Tulloch was little more than thirty years of age when he was gazetted Principal of St. Mary's and Professor of Theology. The moment the vacancy occurred he hoped to derive some advantage from it. He entered into an informal compact with Dr. Brown, the second theological professor, to push their joint-candidature—Brown for promotion, Tulloch for the reversion of Brown's chair. Unfortunately for himself, Dr. Brown had offended the English Government. Owing chiefly to Baron Bunsen's influence the higher post was conferred upon the younger man. The appointment took almost everybody interested in it by surprise. The new Principal had done very little indeed to justify his elevation. To a very narrow circle he was known as a diligent student and a clear thinker. He had written several articles in newspapers, reviews, and other serials, which showed penetration, carefulness, and quality—promise of higher performance in the future. Notably, he had written the article on "Hippolytus" in the *North British Review*. It was this article, as all the world is aware, that procured his early advancement. Able and skilful that article indisputably is. But its ability and skill could claim for themselves only a small share in its success. The tone, the acquaintance with recent German theological literature, the high appreciation of that literature and evident sympathy with its tendency, the free handling of the subject, pointed out the author as a man likely to infuse into Presbyterian theology and the training of candidates for the Presbyterian ministry a more "broad" and "liberal" spirit than had been customary, or perhaps even known hitherto. Tulloch went to St. Andrew's as the chosen representatives of

the *Zeitgeist* in theology and Biblical criticism and exegesis. So far as in him lay, and as opportunity arose, he fulfilled his mission.

Four years before his appointment to St. Mary's he had been transferred from Dundee to Kettins. In that country charge he had gained experience in parochial work, and had found leisure for his literary undertakings. There he had completed his first volume, though its very existence was a secret jealously guarded. Shortly after his accession to the Principalship he received the welcome intelligence that he had been adjudged the Second Burnett Prize for an essay on "Theism: the Witness of Reason and Nature to an All-Wise and Beneficent Creator." The cash itself (£600) came opportunely enough, but the partial vindication of an appointment that had aroused a good deal of unfavourable comment was yet more valuable. True, he had obtained only the second prize, and he counted partly on the first—as which of the competitors did not? True also, he had won by the skin of his teeth—two of the arbitrators expressing "a certain preference" for his essay over another, and the third merely acquiescing in a decision which he was powerless to alter. Still he enjoyed both the substantial reward and the honour. And he had also the extreme gratification of knowing that so competent and widely respected a judge as Mr. Erskine of Linlathen pronounced his essay distinctly superior to the one which was ranked first in the competition. The book may be read to advantage at this hour, despite the changes which the hypothesis of Evolution has necessitated in both attack and defence. Of course a portion of the argument has an old-world air, and is not, in form, of much use in current controversy. But it possesses a philosophical strength and precision which too many treatises of similar purpose lack conspicuously; and it faces the moral difficulties connected with the perfect power and the perfect benevolence of God with a honesty that goes some distance towards solving them.

It will be convenient, however, to reserve criticism of Principal Tulloch's writings, and to trace his life-story to its end. His duties as professor of theology furnished fine scope

for his remarkable gift of personal influence. From St. Andrew's the pulsations of his strong individuality vibrated throughout Scotland. He was busily engaged in schemes of University reform that took him tolerably frequently to London, and helped to bring him into contact with the foremost English statesmen and men of letters. His fame as a preacher grew steadily, if not swiftly; and in 1859 he was appointed one of Her Majesty's Chaplains for Scotland. Twenty-three years later he was gazetted Dean of the Chapel Royal and Dean of the Order of the Thistle. His influence in his own denomination increased day by day, and soon he was recognized externally as one of its foremost representatives, by-and-by distancing all competitors. His office, first as Second, then as Senior Clerk to the Assembly, yielded him nearly unrivalled opportunities of mastering its business, and of carrying out his own convictions. Gradually he developed into a strong and effective speaker, if he was not a ready and facile debater. And he manifested some of the truest qualities of an ecclesiastical statesman—keen-sightedness, courage, breadth of view, fidelity to principle, ability to gauge public opinion, and willingness to abandon gracefully untenable ground. His literary activity never ceased. In addition to a large number of articles for magazines and reviews, and for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, he published some dozen volumes, not one unworthy of his position and reputation, and one—*Rational Theology*—that is likely to win for itself a permanent place in English literature.

As the years sped on children were born to him. The household was an unusually happy one; the society of which it was centre unusually pleasant and genial. Nevertheless a heavy cloud continually overshadowed him. Early in 1862 the inexplicable illness and misery assailed him, from the incidence or the fear of which he was doomed to suffer for the rest of his life. Probably it had some connection with the disease whereof he died; but the connection was not established, and the symptoms did not indicate their cause. The effect was persistent mental depression and distress. For a considerable time his physical health was not affected by it

visibly. In the presence of his friends a childlike look of bewilderment and protest appeared in his eyes that provoked smiles as well as tears. Solitude became intolerable to him, and work a worry and a burden. But his splendid physique gave no sign of decay or weakness. Later, however, his wasted, shrunken frame told a very different story. Until the very end the vigour and acuteness of his intellect did not abate jot or tittle. Disinclination to write or think manifested itself; but when the mind was set working it moved with its accustomed lucidity and force. He kept a record of his sensations, which exhibits no tendency to exaggeration, and contains very little that is mentally morbid. The doctors who examined and conversed with him could discover no loss of philosophical acumen or knowledge, no lapse of memory or excessive irritability, though he laments, in his private journal, that he was so "savagely critical" with them. While suffering severely he went through an entire session of the Assembly without fault in his clerky duties or apparently diminished interest in business. Twice when his mysterious malady was at the worst he undertook rather extensive travels—once on the Continent, once in America—and his observations prove that he was fully possessed of all his faculties. At Rome he delivered to a select company a series of lectures, composed during the journey, on M. Rénan's *Vie de Jésus*, then just published. They were afterwards printed under the title *The Christ of the Gospels and the Christ of Modern History*, and are certainly not the least able of his published works. It would serve no useful purpose to chronicle the issue of the various books written by Principal Tulloch. It suffices to note that *Rational Theology* was issued in 1872, about midway in his Principalship; that he delivered the Croal Lectures on *The Christian Doctrine of Sin* in 1876; and the St. Giles' Lectures on *Movements of Religious Thought in Britain during the Nineteenth Century* less than a year before his death. For a while he edited *Fraser's Magazine*, but his utmost efforts, meritorious and well-directed as they were, failed to resuscitate a moribund serial.

Mrs. Oliphant heads the last chapter, describing his active life, "For Church and Country." It tells how earnestly and arduously the Principal laboured to avert the threatened disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. It was not that he feared loss of prestige and social status, or that he believed that the Church of Scotland could boast any peculiar Divine right. So far as I can gather from his published utterances, he cherished no intense affection for the Presbyterian method of Church-government, and assuredly no strong conviction in favour of its general expediency or its approximation to the Apostolic or primitive form. He held that its special mission at this day is to maintain the establishment principle, the duty of the State to support a National Church, and the corresponding duty of the Church to ally itself with, and, to an indefinite extent, to submit itself to the State. Whether Episcopacy or Presbyterianism ruled was to him a matter of supreme indifference. So little did he appreciate the theoretical difference between the two, that he could see no difficulty in a pet project of his—the reception of Episcopalian orders in addition to those he already held that he might ensconce himself in an English rectory. Proposals of union with the Church of Scotland reached him from two opposite quarters. The Free Church and other non-established Presbyterian bodies on the one side, and the Episcopalian Church in Scotland on the other. To the latter he returned a half-regretful *non possumus*. Scotland would not tolerate an episcopal hierarchy at any price. To the former he opposed a firm front, unless the Free Church and its allies would pledge themselves to uphold the National and Established Church. This was a principle that he would not sacrifice for an instant.

Tulloch helped to conduct the negotiations that resulted in the Scotch Education Act of 1872. He was rewarded by a seat on the Education Board. Now that the recent Report of the Royal Commission on the Education Acts in England and Wales is under discussion, his views as to religious education may be worth quoting. In a speech before the Assembly he said :

“I should deplore if the time ever came when the reading and teaching of these Scriptures should form no longer a part of our common educational system. I believe absolutely in the power of the teacher to read and explain the Holy Scriptures without any sectarian admixture. I believe that all that has been said on this point is simply theory, and that practically there is no difficulty. Sectarianism! why, the whole spirit of the Bible is opposed to sectarianism. Its living study, its simple reading are the best correction of sectarianism; and our Churches, one and all, are only sectarian in so far as they have departed from the Bible and thrown it aside. I should have been glad had the Education Bill been settled on this basis. For myself, I could not accept a narrower basis, and I have no wish for a broader one. The State, I hold, is not entitled to say to the Churches, ‘We shall give no religious training. Take these children; they are yours; train them in their respective religions.’ But the State was entitled to say to the Churches, ‘If you do not think religious teaching on the basis of the Holy Scriptures enough, if you think your own dogmas absolutely necessary, then teach them yourselves.’”

Of irreligious education he would have none. Scarcely less distasteful was sectarian education. He would commit the instruction in Holy Scripture to the teacher alone. I refrain from criticism; but Tulloch's attitude is characteristic, both in its breadth and in its forgetfulness of important elements in the problem.

John Tulloch died on February 13, 1886, at Torquay, whither he had resorted for quiet and change. For days he had seemed almost unconscious, knowing only that his invalid wife was not present with him. His incessant calls for “Jeanie, Jeanie,” brought her to his side. He recognized her and became calm. Mrs. Tulloch survived him but a few months.

It is impossible to close even this rapid sketch without noticing his friendship with our Queen—his genuine affection and respect for her, her high esteem and personal regard for him. To Principal Tulloch's widow the royal widow not only wrote a letter overflowing with sympathy, but paid her a private visit of condolence.

It is scarcely feasible to attempt, in a single page, any estimate of Principal Tulloch's writings, and his influence upon the religious thought of his Church and time. Always he took up the position of an upholder of the principle of an Established Church, and an adherent of a "scientific theology," and a "broadly human" interpretation of the Bible and the creeds. It is scarcely an unfair putting of the case to say that the idea of "rational theology" dominated his intellect. "The spirit of rational inquiry" must not only leaven theology, but must be acknowledged its absolute master. There must be unlimited freedom of thought, investigation, and expression. Reconciliation between this notion and the opinion that secession from a National Church is necessarily unjustifiable is not too easy. Tulloch seems to have held that a comprehensive—that is, a wholly latitudinarian—National Church can furnish the sole guarantee of such liberty; but, apparently, he justified his Erastianism on the ground that only an exclusive State Church could witness sufficiently to the unimportance, even the mischief, of fixed principles, so long as an irreducible minimum of Christian belief was not rejected avowedly. The conception—and, above all, Tulloch's exposition and defence of it—is by no means destitute of value. The Church that frowns down "rational inquiry" is doomed to intellectual ineptitude. And we might well subordinate minor details of symbols and confessions to community of worship. But the defects of the conception go far towards neutralizing its merits. It approaches perilously near to elevating forms above the spirit which they should enshrine. And surely the Church of Christ must assert as well as enquire. Indeed, her primary duty is that of testimony, proclamation, and witness. If there is danger in raising merely human formulæ into unquestionable laws and truths, there is scarcely, if any, less danger in abandoning all fixed principles to the mercy of individual speculation, in preaching unrestrained licence of selection and rejection, if only no glaring violence is done to the laws of logic. After all, the Church dares not dismiss all dogma.

J. ROBINSON GREGORY.

CURRENT POINTS AT ISSUE.

"COWARDLY AGNOSTICISM."

IF noise were work, agnosticism would be the hardest worker of all the "isms." But noise is not work. Generally it is the opposite, as in this very case of agnosticism, which does no work of any kind whatever. It is not good for anything but proclaiming noisily its own ignorance. It advances no thought, makes no discoveries, and explains nothing—not even its own weakness. That, however, was scarcely a reason why the Bishop of Peterborough should call it "cowardly." But there is a reason why this term describes it most accurately, and that reason is stated with grim precision by Mr. Mallock in the April number of the *Fortnightly Review*. His statement is at once an exposure and a *quietus*. The agnostic has not the courage to face the full consequences of his own negations. He has no convictions about God, the soul, or immortality. But what about duty, virtue, and responsibility? How is he to get on in life without convictions about these things? Professor Huxley admits that materialism—that is, necessarianism—would "drown man's soul," "impede his freedom," "paralyse his energies," "debase his moral nature," and "destroy the beauty of his life." A more terrible or more true indictment could not be brought against it. He must consequently see some great gulf between this dark necessarianism and his bright agnosticism that is wholly invisible to others. The two start together, minus God and the soul, and for some time keep unbroken their dreary companionship; but when they together face, and try to explain some change in the world of matter, they part company, and in the easiest manner possible the agnostic escapes disaster. The necessarian says the change *must* happen; the agnostic says it *will* happen; and the thing is done. What a very parody on reasoning is this! Apart from a conscious, unchanging Pro-

ducer of change—that is, God—there is no “will,” there is only “must.” Apart, also, from the power of selection amid suggested activities there cannot be either virtue or vice. Here it is that the agnostic shows cowardice, but a cowardice that, after all, is to be admired, for it proves that the man is better than his system. As Mr. Mallock truly says, “Agnostics dare not face what they have done. They dare not look fixedly at the body of the life which they have pierced.”

THE CLAIM OF THE ROMAN CHURCH.

THE occasional desertions of English clerics from their own victorious and honoured ranks to find refuge in the fortress of Rome keep ever alive the necessity of calling attention to the one great arrogance of that Church, and the danger of this arrogance not only to Protestantism, but to Christianity itself. It is well, therefore, that the subject has found a place in the current number of the *Church Quarterly*, where the positions taken up are simply impregnable. All minor controversies are comparatively useless till this claim be destroyed. It is that the Roman Church is the only exponent of pure Christianity on earth. If this be true, then clearly Christianity itself is responsible for the teaching of its representative exponent, and must be judged thereby. If, therefore, Romanism fails to teach and uphold any great moral law, Christianity must be held defective on the same point, so to be useless for the guidance of life, and not from God. Now, it is beyond dispute that she does fail in, for example, the most important matter of truth. Ballerini quotes St. Alphonsus Liguori as saying that it is the common opinion of all that it is lawful to equivocate under oath. Ballerini, Scavini, Bouvier, and others are agreed that a murderer is not bound to exonerate an innocent person who may be accused and punished for the crime he himself had committed. Alphonsus Liguori maintains that an adulteress may deny that she has broken the marriage *tie*. When put upon her oath, provided absolution has been received, she may assert her innocency or deny her guilt, meaning by this denial that she is not guilty of “idolatry.” These statements have received recent confirma-

tion in a manual of moral philosophy just issued by Mr. Rickaby, S.J., who talks of "speaking the truth under a broad mental reservation." Little wonder if unbelief be prevalent when this is the only teaching given as Christian. "It is sad to know that the chief See of Western Christendom has betrayed the crowning glory of the Christian faith in ways hardly less hideous than those of Pagan Rome;" but to receive this as the one visible Church of Christ on earth would sap the very foundations of faith.

WHAT IS RITUALISM ?

THERE is much talk at present about this something called Ritualism, and that by many who do not exactly know what they are talking about. There are some who stigmatise any service more ornate than their own as "Ritualistic"; this is so easy, and as it saves all further trouble or investigation, it is naturally popular. The first step, however, in ascertaining the truth, or falseness, of any system is to discover accurately what it is. Ritualism may be defined as "the enforcement by external symbolism of certain dogmas." It is not to be mistaken for an increased æstheticism in service, though that is a necessary element. The Rev. W. J. E. Bennett, when before the Ritual Commission, stated that he did not contend for any æsthetic purpose, but strictly for a doctrinal purpose. A writer in the May number of the *Fortnightly Review* very pertinently asks, "What is this doctrine?" and shows by abundance of quotation that it is the doctrine of the sacrificial character of the Eucharist. In the *Manual of Devotion*, for example, before the Communion these words are to be used by the worshipper, "It is as yet only bread and wine, but by the miracle of Thy power and grace it will shortly become the body and blood of Thy beloved Son." The writer proceeds most temperately and ably to prove that such teaching is not sanctioned by the formularies of the Church of England, and that it is contrary to the commonest and most elementary principles of honesty and morality for men who have taken the position of priests in that Church to set aside its teaching and substitute for it some intangible

Catholic tradition. The Bishop of Wakefield, in his recent charge, uttered the following sentiment, "I hold that imitations of Rome are inconsistent with loyalty, on the one hand; while, on the other hand, I find it equally difficult to reconcile with such loyalty . . . anything which may derogate from the honour our Church assigns to the holy sacraments ordained by our Lord."

There is another aspect of Ritualism that demands serious consideration. May it not explain the great success of such books as *Robert Elsmere* and *John Ward, Preacher?* Why should an authoress be assured of abundant readers "if she describe with sufficient minuteness the religious throes of a high-minded, but imperfectly informed and very conceited, young man, and the intellectual vagaries of the teachers in a seat of learning which has been wittily described as the place to which good German philosophies go when they die"? There must be something in the palate of the times that causes such whipped cream to be a favourite dish. May it not be that when men are offered only iridescent bubbles as nourishment they find this sweetened froth to be solid by comparison? Practical men do not understand "ineffable unions," invisible miracles, and the godliness of vestments, genuflexions, and positions. They appreciate harmony for the ear, and beauty for the eye, but feel that either there is no religion to guide life and control men's passions, or it must be something different from this; and, being ignorant of true, manly Christliness, they fall into the daintily baited trap.

"THE HIGHER CRITICISM."

THE "Higher Criticism" is the Lower Criticism, not indeed in name, but in reality. We far too readily assent to the magnificent names our opponents so freely bestow on themselves. They dub themselves "Freethinkers," "Advanced thinkers," "Higher Critics," and other equally flattering designations; we meekly bow consent, and without a word of protest give in to their pretensions. This is very foolish on our part, for there is more in a name than is generally realised. If a man call himself "The Philosopher," and others oblig-

ingly do the same, he will obtain a reputation for philosophy, though he may know as much about it as he does about the non-existent. The result is much the same with regard to our "higher" critics. They come to be regarded as such because they say they are. And so some timid, though not logical, Christians feel that if the Bible will not bear the criticism not only of the higher, but of the highest critics, there must be something wrong; and they almost wish that critics had never been evolved. They are right in the conviction that the Bible ought to be able to bear any true test of thought or criticism; but they are wrong in their wish, for all genuine criticism has had only one result—the clearer illustration of the truth that the Bible is the supernaturally inspired Word of God. Every attack, come from what quarter it may, only serves to show us that we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth.

Let us test, in curtest fashion, this claim of the rationalist to the title of "higher" critic. The higher critic is he who is the better prepared for his work. The better prepared is he who, having equal critical power, brings to his work the more unbiassed mind; that is, the fairer mind. The rationalist critic, therefore, must be the lower, because he starts with the determination to explain the two facts, Bible and Christianity, apart from the supernatural and from miracle. The Christian, on the other hand, starts with the determination to take the Bible as he finds it, and explain it as best he may. He is, therefore, the higher critic. The prejudice of the lower critic warps his judgments, distorts his vision, and makes his conclusions worthless. To illustrate practically the exact results of the higher and lower criticisms we should be able to compare the work of men of different schools who are exactly equal in critical training. But as this is wholly impossible, let us compare one man at two different periods of his life, and ask, when was he the higher critic, when he was a disciple of the Tübingen school, or after he had given it up? When, for example, was Dr. Albrecht Ritschl the higher critic, when he wrote his first edition of *Die Entsehung der Altkatholischen Kirche*, or when he published his second?

Illustrations of the chaos produced by determinism against the supernatural in the manipulation of Scripture are plentiful as applause at a prince's wit. At present, however, one will suffice, and that shall be the result of Professor Huxley's amateurish excursion into the land of German criticism. He is generally supposed to be a sound reasoner, but as Dr. Wace says, in the May number of *The Nineteenth Century*, "What seems to me so astonishing about Professor Huxley's articles is not the wildness of their conclusions, but the rottenness of their ratiocination." "It is not, in fact, reasoning at all, but mere presumption and guess work, inconsistent, moreover, with all experience and common sense." How could it be otherwise with the study of any subject by such a method? What would the Professor say of any student who came to study biology, but only on condition that his self-determined conclusions should be affirmed. All who know this great teacher of biology can imagine the look and tone with which he would be welcomed. This then is the lower criticism, not only because it violates all correct methods of reasoning, but also because it leads to glaring inconsistencies. These men try to take from the Bible that with which it is saturated, and deprive the Christ of those claims He constantly reaffirmed, and then they go into raptures over both the Book and the Man. Spinoza, Pecaute, Fichte, Richter, Strauss, Baur, Rénan, Huxley, wherever they may differ, all agree in perverting the words of Christ, and then extolling the Speaker!

It is also the lower criticism because it is such an utter failure. This is stated by the Christian representative in *Robert Elsmere*, and his statement is not refuted. Dr. Wace also reminds us that the German critics, Hase, Strauss, Baur, Hausrath, Keim, have all made the attempt to explain the records of the New Testament by natural causes, and have all failed. The *Saturday Review* characteristically has it, "As for the huge labours which have been occupied in proving that St. Matthew copied St. Mark, St. Mark St. Matthew, St. Luke both or neither, or that all three copied each other, they are to any one who knows what literary criticism means, simply puerile."

JAS. MCCANN.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

WE gladly welcome a new edition of *Dr. F. Delitzsch's Commentaries. Commentary on Genesis.* (1) Fifteen years have elapsed since the fourth edition was issued; and "the results of incessant labour subsequent to 1872 are deposited in this fifth edition." That it is a well of learning will be quite according to expectation; but though Dr. Delitzsch is perfectly acquainted with all that has been done or attempted in this field of Biblical research by Wellhausen, Kuenen, and Dillman, and appreciates their skill and their labours, he tells us that the spirit of the commentary remains unaltered since 1852. "I am not a believer in the 'Religion of the Times of Darwin.' I am a believer in two orders of things, and not merely in one, which the miraculous would drill holes in. I believe in the Easter announcement, and I accept its deductions." Further on he says, "I esteem the great fundamental facts of redemption as exalted far above the vicissitudes of scientific views and discoveries. . . . Those who, with the Church renovated at the Reformation, will confess that, *Primum toto pectore Prophetica et Apostolica scripta Veteris et Novi Testamenti ut limpidissimos purissimosque Israelis fontes recipimus et amplectimur*, will not make a boast of uttering depreciating, insolent, and contemptuous criticisms concerning the writers of the Bible. Their attitude towards Holy Scripture will be free, but not free-thinking; free, but not frivolous." And this will be especially the case with respect to Genesis—that fundamental book in the Book of books. For there is no book in the Old Testament which is of such cardinal importance as this first book of the Pentateuchal Thorah, which corresponds with the first book of the *quadriforme evangelium*. Dr. Delitzsch maintains, "that the essence of Christianity has no direct relation to such questions as to whether Adam lived 930 years or not; whether the descent of one or other nation be ethnographically or linguistically verified; whether the chronological network of the antediluvian and postdiluvian history appears in presence of the Egyptian and Babylonico-Assyrian monuments to need extension; whether many narratives are but duplicates, *i.e.*, different legendary forms of one and the same occurrence. But if it were true that geology can follow back the age of the earth for myriads, nay, millions of years (Lyellism); and that man was, in the struggle for exist-

ence, developed from the animal world (Darwinism); if in the place of the childlike innocence of the first created pair we have to place the cannibalism of the half-brutal manhood of the stone period; and in that of the Divine re-elevation of the fallen, the gradual upward steps of self-culture during ten thousand years—then, indeed, we admit it without reserve, the Christian view of the world is condemned as henceforth untenable. For documentary Christianity professes to be the religion of the redemption of Adamic mankind, and has for its inalienable premises the unity of the first created pair, and the curse and promise by which this was succeeded. Hence, were we even to grant that Gen. i.-iii. speaks of the beginnings of human history with the stammering tongue of childhood, it must still be maintained,—if Christianity is to hold its ground as the religion of the recovery of the lost, and as the religion of the consummation aimed at from the beginning,—that man, as the creature of God, entered upon existence as at once human and capable of development in good, but fell from this good beginning by failing to stand the test of his freedom. Menken is right when he says, "If the first three chapters of Genesis are taken out of the Bible, it is deprived of the *terminus à quo*; if the last three chapters of the Apocalypse are taken away, it is deprived of the *terminus ad quem*." Dr. Delitzsch is willing to admit a Hexateuch, or a Heptateuch, or an Oktateuch; but he maintains that a Mosiac Torah is the base of all. He deduces many proofs of the antiquity of the accounts, and points out that Jud. (v. 5) celebrates the revelation of God upon Mount Sinai as taking place amidst wondrous phenomena of nature, and that Micah (vi. 4) names Moses, Aaron, and Miriam as leaders out of Egypt; and that Moses is exalted as a prophet by Hosea (xii. 13). Jeremiah (xv. 1) speaks of Moses as powerful in prayer, and Isa. lxiii. 10, *seq.*, is a noteworthy historical testimony. Dr. Delitzsch says that it is a great commendation of the fidelity of Scripture that in the transaction between Abraham and the Hittites respecting the purchase of the cave of Machpelah not a word is said of writing. Nothing is said of cursive writing in Genesis, but we find in Exodus and onwards down to Deuteronomy both an acquaintance with, and the most various use of writing. Of writing on papyrus not a trace is found in Genesis. We now know that cursive writing on papyrus was practised long before the time that Moses lived, and by the kindness of Dr. Kinns, and that of Mr. Renouf, the keeper of the Egyptian antiquities in the British Museum, we have seen a MS. on papyrus

which those learned men believe to be 400 years older than the time of Moses, and there is cursive writing on wood much earlier than this. Here, then, is testimony to the high antiquity and accuracy of the Genesis account, and proof that Moses could well have possessed ability to make a MS. of the Pentateuch; for he "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and it is certain that the Egyptians in the Mosiac period possessed the prerequisites for committing their memorable events to writing. In the account of the creative events of the third day, Dr. Delitzsch remarks that in Gen. i. 11 a second creative act is added to the first—and especially in the case of the fruit-tree, the fruit of it is determined according to its species. While there is now no generation of organic existences from lifeless matter, the world of plants originally came into existence through the earth being miraculously fertilised by the word of God. And here, on the third day, the narrative relegates the severance of the kinds entirely to the beginning of creation. In discussing the phrase translated "Let us make man" (Gen. i. 26), Dr. Delitzsch says it is not a self-objectivising plural, nor merely a *plur. majestatis*, for where it seems to be found we have to admit that God the Father is comprising Himself either with the Son and the Spirit or with celestial spirits. The Midrash and Philo explain that in this place Elohim concedes to the B'ne Elohim an interest in the creation of man, though no actual share in it; and so Dr. Delitzsch is of opinion that we must understand "in our image and in our likeness" as including the angels, who, according to Scripture, form one family together with God. The Divine image in man consists in his being a creature who has mastery over himself (self-conscious and self-determining), and therefore exalted above all other earthly creatures. Man is, as to his physical nature, the most perfect and highly developed of animals; nor is his inner nature, his spiritual soul, categorically different from the animal inner nature. The difference, however, is this, that the spirit-soul of man is self-conscious and capable of infinite improvement because it is God-descended in another and a higher manner. The question of trichotomy or dichotomy is not, according to Dr. Delitzsch, correctly formulated, the Scripture view of man being trichotomous and yet dichotomous.

Thus does this commentator proceed from verse to verse of the fourteen chapters of which the first volume treats, surrounding each passage with a wealth of learning which is in many ways astonishing. The style is somewhat diffuse, and it requires a good deal of attention

at times to see exactly what the commentator means to convey; but the attention which has to be given will in all cases be amply repaid. He does not avoid, nor does he slur over any difficulty; and, though he is fully aware of rationalistic objections to the narrative he is elucidating, Dr. Delitzsch maintains the orthodox belief, and gives reasons which are quite as cogent, and in our idea more convincing, than any which can be alleged to the contrary. The Commentary is a learned book fitted for learned men, and it would be well if many who consider that wisdom can only be attained by the study of "science" were able to read and thoroughly appreciate the vast stores of knowledge which are contained in this monumental work of the great German scholar.

The Manual of Biblical Archaeology (2) is not a Commentary in the usual acceptation of the term, and yet it is a Commentary in a very real sense, and a most useful help in reading the Scriptures, not only to the student who wants authoritative assistance in the elucidation of Holy Writ, but also to the ordinary reader who will be much interested in the vast stores of information which Dr. Keil has so carefully arranged. The second volume, now before us, contains six chapters on Jewish worship; but is mainly taken up with the social relations of the Israelites. Under the head of Domestic Relations are chapters about the dwellings of the Israelites, their food, and clothing. Then follow the nature and character of marriages; the upbringing of children, the treatment of servants, and domestic inmates, and family life in general. Then we find the occupation of the Israelites—agriculture, cattle rearing, trade and industry, science and art, and lastly their State relations, constitution, government, laws, and political standing towards other people. On all these subjects much information is afforded, and the authorities are given, so that the student is guided to the literature bearing on any point. Dr. Keil's remarks on the scape-goat, and on the division of animals into clean and unclean, are suggestive, even if somewhat fanciful. The notes are printed after each section in the same type, only with a little less spacing, so that constant looking at the foot of the page or appendix is avoided. It is hardly necessary to add that the volume is got up with Messrs. Clark's usual care; and it is in every way worthy of standing along with its companions on a shelf ready to hand, for we feel sure it will be often consulted with advantage by all those who wish to attain an accurate knowledge of the meaning of Holy Writ.

The volume of the *Biblical Illustrator* (3), which contains a commentary on the Ephesians, is quite up to the level of those that have preceded it. There is a good introduction, in which all the points of dispute with regard to this Epistle are discussed, and, we must add, their insignificance shown. Every verse in the epistle is amply illustrated with such explanatory remarks as will be useful to the ordinary reader; while the preacher who turns to the volume for homiletical help must be hard to please if he cannot find it.

Dr. Fausset's two handsome volumes (4), one entitled *Studies in the cl. Psalms* and the other *An Expository Commentary on the Judges* have now been some time before the public; and have by their merits won their way into esteem. They are valuable works, done with loving, reverent carefulness and much learning and research. The grouping of the Psalms gives a freshness to them, and often sets them in a new light. For devotional reading it will be found extremely useful. In the *Judges*, Dr. Fausset, does not avoid the difficulties which the Scriptural narrative contains; but he does not greatly advance their elucidation; perhaps it is not, at present, possible to do so; at any rate he does not hazard guesses, which are oftentimes more daring than well founded. The expository portions show that Dr. Fausset knows and values evangelical truth, and they may be recommended as being both sound and sensible.

The first part of the *Pulpit Commentary* (5) on St. Luke is before us; and the best praise we can give it is to say that it is a worthy successor of the volumes that have gone before it. The introduction is very complete, and the commentary and homiletics very useful. When the other volume appears we shall probably review both together at greater length.

(1) *Commentary on Genesis*. Fifth Edition. By F. Delitzsch. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

(2) *Manual of Biblical Archaeology*. By C. F. Keil. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1888. Price 10s. 6d.

(3) *Biblical Illustrator*. Ephesians. By Rev. Joseph S. Exell, M.A. London: J. Nisbet & Co. Price 7s. 6d.

(4) *Horaæ Psalmicæ. Studies in the cl. Psalms*. Price 7s. 6d. *An Expository Commentary on the Book of Judges*. Price 7s. 6d. By Rev. A. R. Fausset, D.D. London: J. Nisbet & Co.

(5) *The Pulpit Commentary*. Edited by the Very Rev. H. D. M. Spence, D.D. (Dean of Gloucester), and by the Rev. J. S. Exell, M.A. London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1889. Price 10s. 6d.

The Homiletic Review (1) is an American monthly **Magazines.** magazine edited by Drs. Funk and Sherwood, and, judging from the number before us, is a very interesting and useful publication. Preachers and ministers, for whom it is primarily intended, will find in it much that is helpful; the notes for sermons, &c., are extremely good, and the longer articles, which are very well done, will be read with interest by a larger number than preachers and ministers. We notice with especial approval an article by the Rev. Owen Jones, entitled "Preacher and Orator," and there is also an excellent criticism on the poetry of modern scepticism by Professor Murray. *The Homiletic Review* deserves to be known widely in this country as well as in America.

The same publishers also send us a number of the *Missionary Review* (2) of the World, which we have read with pleasure. The article which contains further testimonies to missions ought to be read by all manner of persons, for it will encourage those who do take an interest in missionary work, and go far to convince those who decry it, that there is a good deal more done in this way than they think; the rest of the magazine is thoroughly praiseworthy.

The Theological Review (3) contains a very suggestive article about Dr. Hatch's views and researches in Biblical Greek; and another by Mr. Halliday Douglas on the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah. There is also an interesting "Symposium" on Church Service from the Presbyterian point of view, and an excellent series of critical notices.

The Homiletic Magazine (4) for April maintains the level of excellence which this publication has reached. There is a very interesting commentary on Micah, and a capital sermon in outline on "Keeping the Temper." This magazine keeps to its title in the most commendable manner.

The Archæological Review (5) is not strictly theological, but the number for March which is before us contains an able article by Mr. J. Jacobs on "Recent Research in Bible Archæology," the first of a series which is to form a prominent feature in the current year's issue. Mr. Jacobs has come to the conclusion that the antiquary of the old school, "the bones and stones man," as he calls him, can find nothing in the Old Testament on which to exercise his industry and ingenuity. But he thinks that specialists may exercise their powers with advantage. Mr. Jacobs points out the backward state of Old Testament scholarship with regard to the condition of the text, and

is of opinion "that the time seems far off before we can hope to approach anything resembling the *Ur*-text of the Old Testament." We need pure texts; we need also a defined system of chronology; we need especially better lexicographical helps than at present exist. Mr. Jacobs expresses his approval of what the Palestine Exploration Fund has accomplished, and what has been done in Egyptological and Assyriological topography; and he believes that if researches were conducted on the lines of MacLennan's Studies about Marriage or Tylor's Ancient Customs, a decided advance would be made. In the research for "survivals" there would be no reason for confining exertions to the bare Biblical records; Hebrew life and institutions did not cease at once on the close of the Biblical canon. The post-Biblical records are much more voluminous and full on all archaeological matters than the Old Testament; yet the rich stores of the Talmud remain unused. We shall gladly welcome any kind of research which will elucidate the meaning of the sacred text, and therefore we cordially desire that learned men and investigators of all kinds should exert themselves. If they conduct their researches in a proper spirit much good will be done.

The April number of the *Presbyterian Review* (6) maintains the excellence of that well-edited periodical. It is almost invidious to single out for mention any particular article where all are so good; but we are sure that Dr. Hastings' article on "The Differences between Oratorical and Rhetorical Styles," and Dr. Lansing's on the "Egyptian Nile as a Civiliser," will be read with much interest; and so also will Dr. Nicholls' article on "Woman's Position and Work in the Church," and Dr. Chambers', entitled "Consilia Evangelica." Mr. Fotheringham's account of Romanism in Canada should attract the attention of all thoughtful minds, for it points out a great danger. The theology of Ritschl is well criticised by Mr. Galloway, and the reviews of theological literature are very useful.

(1) *The Homiletic Review*. Editors: J. K. Funk, D.D., and J. M. Sherwood, D.D. Publishers: Funk & Wagnalls, New York and London. Monthly.

(2) *The Missionary Review of the World*. Edited by J. M. Sherwood and A. T. Pierson. Funk & Wagnalls, New York and London. Price 25 cents.

(3) *The Theological Review*. April, 1889. Edinburgh: Macniven & Wallace.

(4) *The Homiletic Magazine*. April, 1889. London: J. Nisbet & Co.

(5) *The Archaeological Review*. March, 1889. London: David Nutt.

(6) *The Presbyterian Review*. April, 1889. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. New York: Presbyterian Review Association. Price 3s. 6d.

Sermons. *The Imperfect Angel and other Sermons* (1) is a volume of discourses by Thomas G. Selby. They do not evince any great originality either of thought or treatment. The writer seems to have travelled widely, and draws similes from China and Thibet, and other little known places; but these illustrations do not add much force to the truths propounded. As a specimen of his manner we will quote a passage from the Gospel of Absolution, where Mr. Selby says that the keys of the kingdom of heaven were the keys of knowledge, quoting as a parallel Luke xi. 52. "To bind" and "to loose" was to teach and to rule in the kingdom of heaven in harmony with the knowledge received from the Father. . . . The power of the keys, of binding and loosing, was in reality the power of knowing the essential truths of God's character and will. "Go into an observatory and watch some astronomer as he is following the transit of a star. His telescope is so adjusted that an ingenious arrangement of clockwork is made to shift it with the transit of the star. His instrument is moving in obedience to the movement of the star in the heavens. But the clockwork does not move the star. The astronomer has made his faultless calculations; the mechanic has adjusted his cranks, and pendulums, and wheels, and springs with unerring nicety, and every movement in the telescope answers to the movement of the star in the far-off heavens. The correspondence rests on knowledge. And so when the things that are found on earth are found in heaven, every legislative counsel, and decree, and movement, in a truly apostolic and inspired Church, answers to some counsel, and decree, and movement in the heavens. But then the power of discerning and forecasting the movements of the Divine will and government rests upon the power of interpreting the Divine character, and applying its principles of action, as that character is communicated to us by Jesus Christ."

A volume of sermons on *The Baptism of the Spirit* (2) and other subjects, preached at Hastings by Charles New, deserves a permanent place in the "closet" of the Christian. Mr. New is a faithful, earnest, devout, and helpful preacher, as judged by these sermons.

The author, by his book entitled *A Method of Divine Government*, took at once a leading place among modern philosophers, and still retains it. In this materialist and agnostic age it is refreshing to find a prince among philosophers boldly announcing to the public, that much as he values philosophy, yet he places the Gospel

of Jesus Christ above it. We know no volume of sermons (3) of such solid worth, and in which all the pages are of such uniform excellence. It is essentially a fitting book to be given to a cultured person who imagines that evangelical preaching is only suited for the half educated. We want more writers of the stamp of Dr. M'Cosh, who will be able to wipe off the reproach that the unorthodox publish more thoughtful and readable books than the orthodox.

Words of Life (4). In the modest preface to this volume the author deprecates criticism; but there is no reason why he should; for the contents are well worth reading. The sermons deal with important topics of religion in an interesting way, and are useful as being statements on the orthodox side made with clearness, calmness, and candour. They are, we should judge, more likely to do good by being addressed to a larger circle of readers than can be found at Stamfordham, where they were preached. If Mr. Merson's hearers could fully appreciate his references to Epicureans, Stoics, philosophers, not to say agnostics, they must be above the usual run of village congregations.

The Incarnation of God and other Sermons (5) are discourses which have a high aim, although they do not strike us as being much out of common. The author truly says that a good deal of the power of a sermon depends on the delivery of it, and he tells us that in one or two instances he made the attempt to recompose them before committing them to the press, and that for "some time he has been convinced that the purpose was a mistake; the original spirit and expression vanished in the process. So it is very probable that these sermons were better to listen to than they are to read; but they may serve the primary aim of prolonging the influence of the ministry when the preacher could no longer officiate in person."

Pen Pictures from the Life of Christ (6) are, we imagine, sermons, though not described as such. To each picture is affixed a passage of Scripture, which, though on the preceding page, is still a text for what follows. The pen pictures are not very brilliant or very striking, but they are faithful; and as sermons they have the merit of being short. For family reading they will be found useful.

(1) *The Imperfect Angel and other Sermons.* Thomas G. Selby. Hodder & Stoughton, 1888.

(2) *The Baptism of the Spirit.* By Charles New. 5s. London: James Nisbet & Co., 1888.

(3) *Gospel Sermons.* By James M'Cosh, D.D. James Nisbet & Co., 1888.

(4) *Words of Life.* Sermons on Christian Doctrine, Experience, and Duty. By David Merson. London: R. D. Dickinson. Price 4s. 6d. 1889.

(5) *The Incarnation of God and other Sermons.* By Rev. Henry Batchelor. London: Hodder and Stoughton. Price 5s. 1880.

(6) *Pen Pictures from the Life of Christ.* Rev. J. Cullen, M.A. London: R. D. Dickinson. Price 4s. 6d. 1889.